1964

Francesco Guicciardini: Mirror of Cinquecento Disillusionment

Rita Kucera
Loyola University Chicago

FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI:
MIRROR OF CINQUECENTO DISILLUSIONMENT

by

Rita Charlotte Kucera

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June

1964

CURRICULUM VITAE

Rita Charlotte Kucera was born in Berwyn, Illinois, on November 4, 1931.

She was graduated from Nazareth Academy, La Grange, Illinois, in June, 1949. She received her Bachelor of Arts Honors degree from Mundelein College in June, 1953, and her Master of Arts degree from Loyola University in June, 1955.

The author taught at the Indiana University Gary Center from 1957 to 1959 and lectured at Loyola University at various times from 1958 to 1964. At the present time, she is assistant professor of history at Chicago Teachers College South.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the Quattrocento the Italian states reached their cultural apex. Humanism was in its period of golden splendor as geniuses, under wealthy patrons, produced a flow of masterpieces of literature, painting and sculpture. The men of the Renaissance were not unaware of the epochal significance of their contributions.[1] Both humanists and artists suggested, as Voltaire's sentence ran, that "the glory of genius belonged then to Italy alone, just as it had once been the property of Greece.[2] In modern times, Jacob Burckhardt stressed the importance of the Renaissance state and the self-interest it bred. The Italian "rebirth" was not only a revival of antiquity but it was fundamentally the cultural expansion of the Renaissance Italian, who was in all

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[1]Cf. Wallace K. Ferguson, The Renaissance in Historical Thought (Boston, 1948), pp. 1-28.

[2]Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations, et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire, depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIII, first printed at Geneva in 1756, in Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1883-85), XII, 250. Voltaire did not take Italy's cultural superiority for granted as earlier writers had done, but he explained its basis. He stressed the causal relation between her commercial prosperity and her advanced civilization, ibid., 57, 187.

things the forerunner of the modern world.[3] Serious weaknesses, however, underlay the glory of the "civiltà artistica," the Viconian phrase commonly used to describe the Renaissance.[4] The very brilliance of society tended to delude Italy and to make her unaware of the impending historical tragedy. She had no political force able to operate in her own defense.[5]

The Italian states stood also to be affected significantly by the major economic changes following the discovery of the New World and a new route to the East. The economic fortunes of the mighty Venetian Republic swiftly declined. Cultural pursuits stood to lose with the decline in incoming wealth.

The foreign invasions, beginning in 1494, portended future troubles for Italian civilization. The brutal sack of Rome in 1527 merely symbolized the precipitate course that events had taken. Nor were the familiar Turkish menace and the religious divisions in Germany wholly divorced from the peninsular situation or from the concern of the Holy See.

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[3] Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch (Basel, 1860). The edition of Burckhardt used here is The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore (London, 1928). John Addington Symonds pursued Burckhardtian lines in his lengthy literary work, The Renaissance in Italy, 5 vols. (London, 1877-1886). Citations are taken from the Capricorn edition of Volumes I and II of Symonds' work, The Age of the Despots and The Revival of Learning (New York, 1960). Not all historians were willing to concede the uniqueness of this period. The Romanticists attempted to thrust Renaissance origins back into the Middle Ages while another group viewed the Renaissance as largely a continuation, or even a decline, of medieval culture, Ferguson, pp. 290-385.

[4] Gianbattista Vico (1688-1744), a Neapolitan and the author of the Nuova Scienza, is noted for his emphasis on the constructive as well as the critical nature of historical thought. He stressed the importance of understanding the culture of a people through linguistic and mythological studies.

[5] Pietro Niccolini, Ariosto dopo il IV centenario (Roma, 1936), p. 334.

But the giants of the Renaissance were not wholly uncognizant of the difficulties of their society. Familiarity with their writings reveals the presence, often general and semiconscious, of dismay, disillusionment, cynicism, fear. This was not simply the literary melancholy which is relevant to many periods and which belongs to a certain genre of literary work. Nor was it merely malaise or the malady of the mal du siècle, so familiar, for example, in the nineteenth century. The contrast between Italian expressions of upset and those indicative of contemporary Elizabethan melancholy also are readily evident.[6]

The facts of Italian life were the realistic basis for the concern of those who were able to note the manifestations of decadence. The majority of these men, themselves caught in the maelstrom of portentous activities, realized that their danger could well continue its course. Most frequently, however, their bewilderment and anguish expressed themselves when things had advanced so far that they were personally and bitterly affected.

Even men active only in the isolated society of letters, and there were not a few, could not ignore the chaos in the Italian states which followed in

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[6]Cf. Don Cameron Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism," SP, XXXV (April 1938), 202-227, for a discussion of Elizabethan perturbation over the degeneration of man and the growing senility of the world, of the period's spiritual tension over the ravages of time and its characteristic preoccupation with maxims. Cf. also Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in Elizabethan Literature from 1580 to 1642 (East Lansing, Michigan, 1951). Babb's preface indicates that lapses into melancholy offered, or seemed to offer, an avenue of retreat from a disheartening world of social, political and religious turmoil. It explains that the book treats melancholy in a broad psychological and literary way, however, and not the sobriety and disillusionment then manifesting themselves.

the wake of the invasions. Valeriano, a composer of panegyric and satiric poems and an explorer of antiquities in great favor at the court of Leo X, returned to Rome from Piacenza in the fatal year 1527. He looked in vain for his old comrades and exclaimed in his dialogue "De Literatorum [sic] Infelicitate:"

> Good God!, when first I began to inquire for the philosophers, orators, poets and professors of Greek and Latin literature, whose names were written on my tablets, how great, how horrible a tragedy was offered to me! Of all those lettered men whom I had hoped to see, how many had perished miserably, carried off by the most cruel of all fates, overwhelmed by undeserved calamities: some dead of plague, some brought to a slow end by penury in exile, others slaughtered by a foeman's sword, other worn out by daily tortures; some, again, and these of all the most unhappy, driven by anguish to self-murder.[7]

Valeriano enumerated specific scholars who had died of despair or who had experienced personal maltreatment, whose wealth had been confiscated or whose houses had been burned, who had succumbed to madness, hunger or the plague.[8]

While the wars in Lombardy proved scarcely less fatal to men of letters than the siege of Rome, Symonds explains, those disasters fell singly and at intervals.[9] The fall of Roman and indeed of Italian civilization was exemplified by the symbol of 1527.

Various poetic attempts were made to explain this tragedy. In essays,

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[7]This work, printed at Venice in 1620, is cited in Symonds, Revival, p. 323.

[8]Ibid., p. 323.

[9]Ibid.

epistles and funeral orations, humanists "amply recognized the justice of their punishment" while all Italy re-echoed with their lamentations. In a letter to Jacopo Sadoleto,[10] Hieronymus Niger wrote of "Rome, that is the sink of all things shameful and abominable."[11] Lodovico Ariosto, the epic poet of the "Orlando Furioso," mingled a description of the internal evils of Italy with the barbarian invasions:

> O famished wicked and fierce harpies whom in blinded Italy full or error, perhaps to punish old and heavy faults, High Judgment leads to every table! Innocent children and pitying mothers are perishing from hunger and see that one banquet of these wicked monsters devours all that might be the support of their lives.
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> Greatly he sinned who opened the caves that for many years before had been closed, whence came out the stench and the gluttony that spread themselves to sicken Italy. Fair living was then buried; and quiet shut out in such a fashion that she has ever since been in wars, in poverty, and in trouble, and is going to be for many years,
>
> until one day she will shake her locks at her indolent sons and drive them out of Lethe, shouting to them: 'Is there no one who has vigor like that of Calais and Zetes? who will free the tables from the filth and the claws and return them to their happy purity, as long ago the brothers did those of Phineus and later the paladin those of the Ethiop king.'[12]

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[10]Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto (1477-1547) was one of the most important figures on the Roman scene from 1515 to the Council of Trent. He served as papal Secretary to Leo X and to Clement VII, as Bishop of Carpentras and later as Cardinal. He is commonly associated with the "middle group" of Catholic reformers who sought a reformation of the Church within the limits of tradition.

[11]Cited in ibid., p. 323.

[12]Cf. Orlando Furioso di Ludovico Ariosto, ed. Nicola Zingarelli (Milano, 1934), 34:1-3. This is the most recent and critical edition of the poem. The English translation given here is from the able effort of Allan Gilbert (New York, 1954).

For many years, as Ariosto wrote, Italy was but a mute member of the European community of states. Culturally too she lapsed into quietude in the Barocca. Not until the nineteenth century did Italy really awaken from the deep slumber in which she had been entranced since the early Cinquecento.[13]

Although the Ariostean prediction proved to be correct, the realm of the poets is usually the realm of fantasy. Literature, the mirror of life, must take second place to the world of day-to-day civil life. And it was this that formed the tragic basis of the literary cries. What was the political status of the Italian states in the period of the High Renaissance?

One of the major political thinkers of his era and of all ages, Niccolò Machiavelli, linked himself with the poets when he judged Italy to be "la corruttela del mondo" and her case to be desperate.[14] Further he had a lucid understanding of the new European power structure. Venice, Florence, Milan, Naples and Rome were destined to play but secondary parts on the new historical stage, occupied by the colossal dramatis personae of France, Spain, Austria and England. Unquestionably one of the chief features of the Renaissance was the appearance for the first time of the national state. A power struggle among

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[13]Benedetto Croce, Storia della Età Barocca in Italia, 2ª ed. (Bari, 1946) finds the historical origins of the nineteenth-century Italian state in the Barocca, a time when the "ethical will" appeared exhausted but actually was preparing for the laborious work it would later undertake in the building of the new Italy. Cf. also A. Robert Caponigri, History and Liberty (Chicago, 1955), pp. 89-166, for an elaborate discussion of Croce's conception of ethico-political history as applied to seventeenth-century Italy.

[14]Machiavelli wrote: "non si può sperare nelle provincie che in questi tempi si veggono corrette, come è l'Italia sopra tutte le altre," Discorsi, lib. i, cap. 55, cited in Symonds, Despots, p. 282 and n.1.

the national states of Europe was a natural and logical political development. No one of them could survive without adding to its dominion and consolidating its strength in new regions. France is a good example of this political phenomenon as the Habsburg states are classic examples of dynastic statecraft. With the election of Charles V as emperor in 1519, the Habsburg-Valois struggle for mastery of Europe and the western Mediterranean began as the final phase of the power conflict of the Renaissance era. Following a "manifest destiny" policy, Charles wished to extend his power and to cut out any opportunities for French interference with his plans. Francis I realized that a strong re-assertion of French claims to Naples and Milan was vitally necessary in the face of imperial power and prestige.

Since the states of the peninsula were incapable of coping with these major powers, they became an arena for their contests and the object of their spoliations. While the majority of Italians knew the fury of these "barbarians," they were not as a whole conscious of the complex causes of the changes they were experiencing. It is not surprising that the individual governments found it difficult to view events with a clear European vision. This perspective was limited to only a few. For more than three centuries, the Italian states had been accustomed to a system of diplomacy and intrigue among themselves. Like the ancient Greek city-states, their individual loyalties and petty jealousies kept them disunited at a time of serious and crucial moment. They had, however, experienced German, French and Spanish interest at a much earlier period in their history. The invasions did not represent a completely new phenomenon for them, but their placement within the new power structure afforded ample opportunity for concern.

Within the narrow sphere of Italian politics, the princes and ruling groups looked to the attainment of their own selfish objects. They involved not only their own states but ultimately all the others with the foreign powers who towered over them like Ariostean harpies. Once the chains of the artificial Italian equilibrium had been broken by princely selfishness and lack of foresight, no one state was safe from the others.

The first sign of the alteration about to take place was the invasion of Charles VIII in 1494, long prepared in the reign of his predecessor. On the one hand, it made the northern nations even more deeply aware of the pregnant culture of Italy. On the other, it eventuated in the increase of the familiar weakness, discord, egotism and corruption known to readers of Burckhardt and Symonds.

Of the five major states of the peninsula, Rome acted as the fulcrum. Under Alexander VI and Julius II, the Holy See had become the chief power in Italy. At this period in Venetian history, the Republic's energy was no longer needed for the extension of her rule but rather for its preservation against the European league. The Venetian oligarchy, whose attention had been firmly fixed on the aggrandisement of the Republic, was determined to maintain her power. Florence, with continuing factional struggles, now between the piagnoni and the ottimati,[15] concentrated her failing vigor for use in the internal struggle

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[15] In the Florentine political history of Guicciardini's period, the popolari were the democratic party and the ottimati the aristocratic group. During Savonarola's rule, the ottimati, rabidly antagonistic to him, were termed arrabbiati. From 1527 to 1530, arrabbiati referred to the advanced democrats who were uncompromisingly hostile to the Medici. Under Savonarola, the popolari were termed frateschi or piagnoni by their opponents. Medici partisans were called the palleschi or, after their expulsion in 1494, the bigi, Ferdinand Schevill, History of Florence, (New York, 1961), pp. 442, 484.

awaiting her at the end of the second Cinquecento decade. Though Venice did not ignore literary achievement, she never publicly encouraged it as had Florence. But the Medici transferred the Florentine traditions of culture to Rome with Giovanni and Giulio. At Naples the Aragonese dynasty experienced continual troubles with baronial revolts in the 1480's and later feared Charles V's pretensions. The southern provinces of Italy were rent from the time of the struggle of Ferdinand of Aragon and Louis XII. But it was Milan, first among the Lombardian towns, which was doomed to bear the brunt of the Swiss, French and German armies. While the Sforzas tried to maintain the semblance of their dukedom, the populace lived under the hand of their conquerors.

Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli's great hero, and Julius II had either destroyed or obliterated the lines of the smaller principalities. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Ferrara, Mantua and Urbino alone continued the traditions of the previous age.

A constant factor during the periods of stress and upheaval in the peninsula prior to 1527 was the primacy of the papal position, in spite of the personal insecurity of the incumbents, especially Clement VII. Not less important was the city of Rome. Not only did Rome have the pope, revered by the Catholic powers in spite of his measure of temporal potency and the balance of his diplomatic weight, but also the sacred city of Christendom had not as yet felt the scourge of war that was breaking the spirit of the northern capitals. Thus it was only natural that the political and intellectual

energies of the Italians should find their center here.[16]

To this situation and its variegated facets reacted a figure ranked with Machiavelli and Ariosto as one of the "three keenest intellects of Italy,"[17] Francesco Guicciardini.[18] The use of the word "Machiavellian" to connote

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[16]Symonds, Revival, p. 320.

[17]This judgment has been made by a pioneer scholar of the social life of the Renaissance principalities, Edmund G. Gardner, The King of Court Poets: a Study of the Work, Life and Times of Lodovico Ariosto (London, 1906), p. 166.

[18]In the interests of unity and clarity, a biographical sketch of Guicciardini is given here. Further details of his life will necessarily come to light in the various chapters.

The Guicciardini family, like the majority of families important during the republican period, issued from the popolani grassi or buoni popolani, the nouveaux riches of Florence. For more than two centuries they had played a predominant role in Florentine government. In its long history of civil service, the family included gonfalonieri, priori and ambassadors.

Francesco (1483-1540) was educated in the humanist tradition by his father, Piero, austere and melancholic, according to the testimony of contemporaries. In his later life, Francesco evidenced a predilection for his grandfather, Jacopo, who had rendered wise service as a counsellor of Lorenzo de'Medici. The bent of his nature was clearly to political life. In 1505 he took his law doctorate after studies in civil and canon law at Florence, Padua and Ferrara. As a practicing lawyer in his native city, he defended important families and corporations, but it was not long before the somewhat sterile law of the Renaissance proved unable to sustain his interest. His brilliant career as an advocate and jurist, together with the renown his family had already acquired in the public service, led in 1512 to his appointment as a diplomatic representative from his native city to the court of Spain. Although he had received his commission under Soderini's government, he retained his post upon its fall and the Medici return to Florence. He was to promote there the interests of Florentine commerce as well as diplomacy. Upon his return to Florence in 1514, he came to look upon their recent restoration as an evident attempt to renew their tyranny, and he immediately began to formulate his plan of ottimati government. In 1516 Guicciardini began his long term of papal-Medicean service, for eight years governor of Modena with jurisdiction over Reggio and Parma and their territories, and finally president of the disturbed Romagna under Clement VII. He acted as lieutenant-general of the papal and Florentine troops fighting the imperial forces until 1527. He relinquished his office of papal lieutenant after the signing of Clement's treaty of peace with the Emperor, though he retained his presidency of the still-disturbed Romagna a short while longer. In 1527, with the second expulsion of the Medici, Guicciardini rallied to the support of the Capponi regime, representative of the ottimati, and worked for

cunning action indicates a widespread acquaintance with the ideas of the Florentine Secretary's Il Principe. And unlike Ariosto, Guicciardini has

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the reconciliation of the Florentine Republic with the Emperor. In 1529, with the succession of the arrabbiati Carducci, Clement took advantage of the imperial offer to reestablish Medici control in Florence. Guicciardini concurred in this plan and was condemned as a Florentine rebel, though the city fell to the papal-imperial troops in 1530. In mid-1531 he became vice-legate to Bologna, an important post procured for him by Clement. After his recall from this position by Paul III, to Duke Alexander, Guicciardini returned to Florence and in 1535 became a counsellor, who was to head the city as capital of the Tuscan duchy. During these years, Guicciardini worked against partisans of a popular government and, after the murder of the Duke in 1537, proclaimed Cosimo de' Medici as his successor. He then retired to his country villa to complete his Storia d'Italia.

Guicciardini's writings include: Ricordanze and Memorie di famiglia and Storia fiorentina (1508-11); Diario del viaggio in Spagna (1512); Relazione di Spagna (1513); his Discorsi politici, consisting of Considerazioni intorno ai "Discorsi" del Machiavelli sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio and several individual writings on battles, alliances and treaties (various dates); Discorsi sul reggimento di Firenze, then Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze (1521-25); Scritti apologetici, including Consolatoria (1527), Oratio accusatoria, Defensoria (1527); Cose fiorentine (1527-35); Ricordi (in their private form, 1512, revised in 1528, and in their mature form, 1530), and finally Storia d'Italia (1535-40).

Guicciardini's own jottings form the best source for his youthful years. Cf. especially his "Memorie di famglia, "Scritti autobiografici e rari, ed. Roberto Palmarocchi (Bari, 1936), pp. 1-50, and his "Ricordanze," ibid., pp. 51-98. This applies also to his political and historical writings upon which this entire dissertation has been built.

Among the general works which afford accurate and useful factual material on Guicciardini's life are the following: C. Antoniade, Trois figures de la Renaissance (Paris, 1937); Eugène Benoist, Guichardin: Historien et homme d'etat italien au XVI^e siècle (Paris, 1862); L. Chiesi, Reggio nell'Emilia e Francesco Guicciardini governatore della città (Reggio Emilia, 1892); Vittorio Cian, Il perfetto cavaliere e il perfetto politico della Rinascita, Baldassarre /sic/ Castiglione e Francesco Guicciardini (Firenze, 1930); A. Geffroy, "Une autobiographie de Guichardin d'après ses oeuvres, inédites," Revue des deux mondes, I, sér. 3 (1874), 656-685, and "Un politique italien de la Renaissance: Guichardin et ses oeuvres inédites," ibid., XXXIV, sér. 2 (1861), 961-964; Luigi Malagoli, Guicciardini (Firenze, 1939); Gino Masi, "Il Guicciardini e la giurisprudenza del suo tempo," Francesco Guicciardini nel IV centenario della morte (1540-1940) (Firenze, 1940), pp. 117-139; Siro A. Nulli, Francesco Guicciardini (Bologna, 1936); Andre Otetea, Francois Guichardin, sa vie publique et sa pensée politique (Paris, 1926); Roberto Ridolfi, Vita di Francesco Guicciardini (Roma, 1960). Before the publication of the elaborate work of Ridolfi, Otetea's work was the most complete biography. Ridolfi has

known neither, to use the Manzonian[19] phrase, "l'altere e la polvere," the altar of popularity nor the dust of the library.[20] Rather, as his various works came to light, scholars evidenced a renewed though usually temporary interest in him, and Romanticists and men of the national revival of the latter nineteenth century often interpreted Guicciardini's role to accord with the view of their own periods.[21]

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utilized much material from the Carteggi of Guicciardini, now in the process of publication. For brevity, balance and accuracy, cf. also Federico Chabod, "Francesco Guicciardini," Enciclopedia italiana (Roma, 1933), XVIII, 244-248.

The excellent index of Ridolfi's Guicciardini, pp. 536-542, provides additional chronological material on his subject's life and writings.

[19]Alessandro Manzoni (1784-1873) a Milanese in touch with many of the influences that formed modern Italian thought, is best known for his novel, I Promessi Sposi, well as many lyrics.

[20]Niccolini, Ariosto, p. 18.

[21]For many centuries, the fame of Guicciardini rested on the Storia d'Italia. Guicciardinian studies multiplied with the publication of the Opere inedite, ed. Counts Piero and Luigi Guicciardini with a commentary by Giuseppe Canestrini, 10 vols. (Firenze, 1856-67), though this edition was by no means a critical one. Interest was, however, shifted to the man rather than the historian. Benoist, Guichardin, used the first three volumes of Canestrini together with archival material to formulate his definition of the "political condottiere." Following on Benoist's tracks were several prominent writers on Machiavelli. Nor was his thesis unknown to Francesco de Sanctis. "L'uomo del Guicciardini," Saggi critici, ed. Luigi Russo, III (Bari, 1952) whose article was first published in Nuova antologia in October, 1869. He studied Guicciardini's character and pointed out his perfidy. Many nineteenth-century estimates found in the Ricordi, in the phrase of De Sanctis, "la corruzione italiana codificata ed elevata a regola di vita." Even Symonds agreed that this was a most accurate description of the Ricordi in contrast to the patriotic and sometimes enthusiastic traces evident in Machiavelli's Il principe. From this time until 1919, various aspects of Guicciardini's were analyzed and episodes of his life reconstructed. From that date a new phase of Guicciardinian studies began with A. Gherardi's edition of the Storia d'Italia sugli originali MSS. (Florence, 1919), which had utilized much archival material. New editions of this major work and other volumes of Guicciardini meant intensive critical work. Too many prejudgments of nineteenth-century historiography had generated anachronistic applications of the concept of liberty as applied to Guicciardini's career. Florentine republicans saw in Guicciardini a fierce adversary.

While significant progress has been made in Guicciardinian studies, he continues to prove a most enigmatic figure in relation to his times. No single work holds the key to understanding him. The Ricordi, for example, are valuable as a document of introspection, for a knowledge of his intimate thoughts, but they present only a very limited and contradictory side of his character. Guicciardini's critics, a recent writer has noted, seem to have forgotten this and to have concentrated their attention on the revelations of the Ricordi rather than on his chief work, the Storia d'Italia.[22]

Judgments of Guicciardini can be made from various angles, but he should

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Guicciardini a fierce adversary, a friend of tyranny, a corrupter of customs, almost a traitor to country. Some progress toward a more balanced appraisal was made in the era of the national revival, when the Storia d'Italia constituted the principal reason for reprinting his works. He narrated the crisis of Italian liberty and first suggested the history of Italy, not only that of a city or a region. It is at least with this traditional judgment that modern work can join hands. For a detailed discussion of the various interpretations of Guicciardini, cf. Palmarocchi, Studi guicciardiniani (Firenze, 1947), pp. 113-124, and Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, Dante politico e altri saggi (Torino, 1955), especially pp. 157-171.

[22] Ibid., p. 159. The title of the Storia was given posthumously. Cf. Ridolfi's Genesi, also his Guicciardini, pp. 441, n. 13, and 513, n. 41.

be accepted primarily for what he was, an historian.[23] He spoke favorably of the service rendered by the student of history: he who recorded events could give the best evidence of the course of affairs.[24] In some respects, Guicciardini linked himself with the earlier tradition of historical writing, but he was no mere chronicler.

In 1490 the Neapolitan humanist, Giovanni Pontano, wrote his Actius on the relation between poetry and history. Here he set down three functions of history, which loom importantly in both the theory and practice of Renaissance historical writing. First, history is res gestae and war must be its principal component. Second, since war is in the realm of the contingent, the historian must pay heed to all chance, like weather, pestilence or treachery,

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[23]For a discussion of Guicciardini's technical role as an historian and of his placement in the general pattern of historical writing, cf. Ettore Allodoli, "Genesi della 'Storia d'Italia' di Roberto Ridolfi," Francesco Guicciardini nel IV centenario, pp. 246-256; Benedetto Croce, History, its Theory and Practice, trans. Douglas Ainslie (New York, 1921); Eduard Fueter, "Guicciardini als Historiker," Historische Zeitschrift, C (1908), 486-540; Fueter, Storia della storiografia moderna, trans. A. Spinelli, 2 vols. (Napoli, 1943-44); Emile Gebhart, "Les historiens florentins de la Renaissance et les commencements de l'économie politique et sociale," Séances et travaux de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques, CIV (1875), 552-590; J.F. Jameson, "The Development of Modern European Historiography," Atlantic Monthly, LXVI (1890), 322-333; Ridolfi, Genesi della Storia d'Italia guicciardiniana (Firenze, 1939); James W. Thompson, A History of Historical Writing, Vol. I (New York, 1942); E. Zanoni, La mente di Francesco Guicciardini nelle opere politiche e storiche (Firenze, 1897).

[24]Francesco Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, ed. Costantino Panigada (Bari, 1929), V, 318.

which might have some effect on the conduct of the war. Third, the historian must report oracles, prophecies, visions, sacrifices and the like, as manifestations to men of the processes operative behind the appearances of things.[25]

Both Philip de Commines and Guicciardini follow precepts like those of Pontano, treating of war and of the individuals and circumstances that condition it.[26] Although Commines might be linked more closely with the medieval writers, both he and Guicciardini have points in common. Both believed in the determinisms of God[27] and of fortune which could not be interpreted by the human observer. Likewise, both believed that the apparent inevitability of past happenings had been further conditioned by the wisdom, follies, virtues and vices of the individuals who made the various decisions.[28]

Guicciardini had the ability to observe his subjects' character acutely and to analyze their motives for action. His keen estimate of the proximate and ultimate factors in the French invasions, or those which intensified Italian vulnerability to this curse, and of the leading individuals involved is

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[25]Myron P. Gilmore, "Freedom and Determinism in Renaissance Historians," Studies in the Renaissance, ed. M.A. Shaaber (New York, 1956), III, 49-51.

[26]The last two books of Philip de Commines' Memoirs are devoted to the Italian expedition of the French.

[27]The opening pages of the Storia d'Italia present the image of the affairs of men as comparable to the sea agitated by winds. The lessons of history can teach us only to refer ourselves to "the ways of God and not those of men," Guicciardini, Opere, ed. Vittorio de Caprariis (Milano, 1953), p. 373.

[28]Gilmore, 59.

classic.[29] Though the form of the Storia d'Italia is chronological, the work is fundamentally analytical. It begins with the year 1492, where Machiavelli's history of Florence and related Italian affairs ends, and concludes with the death of Clement VII in 1534.

Guicciardini was, like later scientific historians, conscious of the complexity of his field. Though himself of a communal background, he realized the necessity of extending the municipal limits of communal and humanistic historiography and of giving national history a European scope. His aim was based on the perception that Italian affairs in themselves could only be judged erroneously. Highly variable, in only a few months many things were different from what they had been, for they depended in great part on the activities of the great powers.[30]

In his historical work as well as in his active career, Guicciardini was eminently conscious of change. He wrote that it was not enough to consider the world at any given moment, for at any time countless accidents could arise to increase present difficulties.[31] He cautioned also that on slight causes

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[29] Cf. infra, pp. 26-31.

[30] Le cose d' Italia si possono male giudicare da per sé, sí perché le sono in sé molto mutabile, e si vede che in pochi mesi variano assai, sí perché le dependono in grandissima parte da quello che farà lo imperadore, el re catolico, Inghilterra ed e' svizzeri..., "Sulle mutazioni seguite dopo la battaglia di Ravenna," Scritti politici e ricordi, ed. R. Palmarocchi (Bari, 1933), p. 91. This piece was written in Spain in 1512.

[31] "Oratio Accusatoria," Scritti autobiografici, p. 226: "Non ci bisogna solo considerare el mondo come sta ora, ma possono nascere ogni ora molti accidenti che augumenterebbono sanza comparazione le difficultà, e'sospetti e pericoli."

depended the course of the most weighty affairs.[32] He was well aware that one could not be secure in the possession of things not in themselves perpetual and which could be lost at any time, particularly through changes in court or in the pope's will. In his own career he tried to hold these good things as "aliene."[33]

One could not help but notice that Italian affairs were largely dependent on the role of the princes. Guicciardini explained that, since rulers were often conscious of their own inclination to prefer their interest to faith, they thought that the same was true of other princes.[34] Treaties depended for their execution on the sincerity and good will of the rulers as well as on countless other factors often unknown.

Guicciardini contrasted the unity in imperial affairs with the disunity in confederate ranks. At the height of difficulty in 1526, he recognized that the negotiations, the provisions and operations of the anti-imperialists were "delayed, interrupted and varied, according to the forces, the views and the counsels of the princes." The Emperor, on the other hand, exerted his utmost strength for his resolution depended on himself.[35] Though Charles V did not have the control over his own affairs that Guicciardini believed he had, it was logical for him to hold that view. Guicciardini always tended to equate

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[32] Storia d'Italia, V, 279.

[33] "Consolatoria," Scritti autobiografici, pp. 170-171.

[34] Storia d'Italia, V, 10.

[35] Ibid., 64.

successful action with basic unity. Symonds follows Guicciardini in stressing the princely neglect of their responsibilities. While the glory of Italy like that of Greece lay in letters, the arts and the civilities of life, her ruin lay in indolent princes and the lack of arms. The very conditions which allowed her to produce her culture seem to have rendered her freedom impossible, for spiritual ascendancy was purchased at the expense of political solidity and national prosperity.[36] In 1526 Guicciardini criticized Francis I for his indolence and insincerity in League affairs but he thought that the Italian rulers were primarily to blame for their difficulties. Nor was there any significant assistance from skillful military leaders who obstinately rejected all advice and badly managed important affairs.[37]

So much for the variable factors at work in human history. Guicciardini unquestionably realized their significance. No less, however, did he understand the essential unity of history. The past, the present and the future are fundamentally alike, though they may seem divergent in surface aspects. One is able to make an estimate of a situation on the basis of another which is similar.[38] Wise men alone are able to recognize the similarity in events, for

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[36] Revival, p. 460.

[37] This was the case with the great French commander, Lautrec, Storia d'Italia, V, 208, 219, 228, 230.

[38] "Le cose del mondo hanno questa condizione, o vogliàno dire circulo: che sempre quello che è, ha similitudine col passato, e quello che sarà, sarà simile a quello che è stato. E diverso nelle superficie e ne' colori, ma simile nelli intrinsechi e sustanzialità; pero non si può errare a misurare questo con la misura di quello;" "Ragioni che consigliano a Clemente VII di accordarsi con Carlo V: in contrario," Scritti politici, p. 184.

"the faces of men and the outer appearances of things change." Guicciardini adds that "history is good and useful because it places before you and makes you see and realize what you had never known or seen."[39]

Not only was there unity in Guicciardini's vision, but the unity of his diplomatic and historical careers must be stressed as well. More than almost any other historical figure, he must be interpreted on the basis of the intimate link between his thought and the action and events of his times. He wrote two objectively distinct types of works, political and historical, but the two stem from the same mental set fundamentally and are related to each other in an evolutionary fashion.[40] The early Storie fiorentine evidenced Guicciardini's realization of the necessity for understanding accurately past events as a basis for statesmanlike action. The only way to transcend the historical situation is to try to discover how it has come to be. His background researches and the judgment acquired in his primary historical endeavor proved useful for him in his more active concerns in behalf of his native city. His diplomatic mission in Spain gave him a model for action, Ferdinand of Aragon, akin to the meaning of Cesare Borgia for Machiavelli. Guicciardini's thought, especially in its mature presentation, was greatly dependent upon his practical experience. His experiences laid the basis for the cynicism of the

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[39]Letter to Machiavelli, May 18, 1521, Carteggi di Francesco Guicciardini, ed. Piero Giorgio Ricci and Roberto Palmarocchi (Bologna, 1938--), IV, 60.

[40]A masterful study of this evolutionary relationship has been made by Vittorio de Caprariis, Francesco Guicciardini dalla politica alla storia (Bari, 1950).

Ricordi and for the sombre atmosphere of the Storia d'Italia. The narrative of the Storia began with what became Book XVI, the Battle of Pavia. Begun in 1535, that work was for a time planned as a Guicciardinian autobiography.[41] This fact alone is a striking indication that his own tragedy was part of one more vast.

Machiavelli paid a tribute to Guicciardini for the political experience and judgment that was his. Up to 1521, Guicciardini had been busy with governmental and administrative affairs and had written very little and had published nothing. By that date, much of Machiavelli's major work had already been accomplished or was being executed. In 1524, he replied to Guicciardini, who had given him some errand to perform for his property at Poppiano, that he had been spending his time in the country writing his Storia and would give "ten soldi--I won't say more" to have Guicciardini at his side. He explained that he was coming to "certain details" and needed his friend's opinion as to whether he offended either by exaggeration or understatement.[42]

Personally, Machiavelli was far different from the aristocratic and somewhat solemn Guicciardini. One authority thinks that real friendship and congeniality between them was not possible until the fierce storms of Italy

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[41]Cf. the enlightening account of Ridolfi, Genesi della storia d'Italia guicciardiniana; cf. also Passerin d'Entrèves, Dante politico, p. 164.

[42]Letter to Guicciardini, August 30, 1524, Machiavelli, Lettere familiari, ed. Edwardo Alvisi (Firenze, 1883), p. 435.

found them both in the same boat.[43] They were just as different in the realm of history, perhaps more so. Machiavelli's need for advice points up the fact that he was not interested in the minute and diligent search for facts so evident in Guicciardini's histories. He wrote history to serve the purposes of political science, not so much as an historian. From the facts as he had them, he wished to derive lessons, principles and doctrines, while, on occasions, he manifested no scruples about fitting the facts to his theories.[44]

While Guicciardini is "il politico e solo un politico," Machiavelli is rather of a poetic mentality. The poet obeys no laws other than his own fantasy and can put his intuitions into a harmonious unity, while the political writer must follow a complicated and often capricious development of facts, affirm or deny their relevance and accuracy, and walk through ways never direct or continuous. The poet conquers reality by evading it, and a light of hopeful prophecy illumines his melancholy. The political writer, on the contrary, finds his liberation only in success. If this is lacking to him, his very ideas become burdens which drag him down and crush him.[45] In this perceptive judgment, one finds a guiding light to the often tortuous road of Guicciardinian thought and action, for he was indeed "il politico," to whom Machiavelli "had

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[43]Ridolfi, The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli, trans. Cecil Grayson (Chicago, 1963), pp. 187-188.

[44]Ibid., pp. 196-197.

[45]These views are expressed by Palmarocchi, Studi guicciardiniani, p. 111.

always been ut plurimum a promoter of extravagant opinions and an inventor of new things."[46]

Guicciardini's focus was almost entirely political, for this was the side of events which conditioned their course within a state down to the most minute detail. Neither economic nor theological problems troubled him.[47] Still he was not oblivious of his age's pioneering spirit. He wrote some very noteworthy pages dedicated to the commerce of the Portuguese and to the discovery of the New World. With the Columbian discovery, the Old World was assailed by the New. He praised the brave man and his successors who came upon these good things, but he did not hesitate to intimate that their zeal for the spread of the Christian religion did not always outweigh their cupidity for riches. Yet, in the course of events, many natives became converted to "nostra religione."[48]

One-half century after Columbus' navigation and in consequence of his discovery, Guicciardini commented that some of the principles (cardini) long accepted by revered scholars and sacred writers no longer rule, and everything remains in a state of discussion.[49] In accordance with his method of strict marshaling of the facts, usually with a sparse commentary, Guicciardini did not

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[46]Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 188.

[47]Guicciardini simply repeated the usual humanist criticisms of abuses in the Church. Cf. infra, p. 449.

[48]Storia d'Italia, II, 127-132.

[49]"Ne' solo ha questa navigazione confuso molte cose affermate dagli scrittori delle cose terrene, ma dato, oltre a ciò, qualche anzietà agli interpreti della scrittura sacra....," ibid., p. 132.

pose any problem here. Rather he seemed to be suspended between Renaissance admiration for this New Ulysses and an unnerving apprehension of its potential violence.

In a sketch of "Guicciardini vecchio e nuovo," the need has been cited for an explanation of his role in accordance with more recent views of the Renaissance.[50] This dissertation attempts to illuminate a vital area of Cinquecento life by portraying Guicciardini as a major figure of that society, as one who not only advanced his views but who also examined them in his latter years. The extent to which he was a cooperating agent in the ultimately debilitating vagaries of papal and Medicean service or a reflection of the general and growing disillusionment of the period are two aspects of the same question.

Chapter two will deal with Guicciardini's views on the fundamental problem of his age, namely, the confrontation of the political units of Italy with the major European powers struggling for hegemony over them primarily as Guicciardini handled it in his Storia d'Italia. Chapters three and four will deal with papal policies, the first, from Alexander VI through Leo X, and the latter, under Clement VII. The papacy was indeed the Italian fulcrum, and Guicciardini's own disillusionment was intimately linked with the failure of the Cinquecento papacy to lead Italy away from the policy of destruction to which, wittingly or otherwise, she was precipitating herself. Chapter five will treat Guicciardini's attitudes toward his beloved Florence, in her past and

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[50] Passerin d'Entrèves, Dante politico, p. 159.

present, and his role in connection with events leading to her tragedy in 1532. For him the Florentine decline meant the death-knell of his highly prized borghese government, to him bound with the salvation of Italy. Chapter six will investigate Guicciardini's "religion," important for an understanding of any thinker, and particularly so for one often held to have been one of the most immoral, or amoral, men of the Renaissance. Chapter seven will serve as a résumé of the material of the thesis and will attempt to make as precise as possible Guicciardini's own state of mind during his active career and the latter years of his life in its relationship to the weltanschauung of the most critical period of the Cinquecento.

CHAPTER II

GUICCIARDINI

AND THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE

Guicciardini's Storia d'Italia was also his political testament. He surveyed the Italian scene from 1490 to 1534 not only as a careful historian of his age but also from the vantage point of one intimately involved in the peninsula's struggles. Basic then to a study of Guicciardini's pessimism are his views on Cinquecento Italy and the fashioners of her policy.

From his own period, the historical situation has become well known. Later writers have detailed the power struggle in the Italian arena, but this does not mean that this topic can be dismissed here. It is what Guicciardini saw through the maze of historical facts that is vital for the problem of the dissertation. With an almost uncanny political acumen, he analyzed acutely the situation that spelled Italy's political collapse in the sixteenth century, especially the rampant division, ambition and jealousy of the Italian states and their rulers. One reads Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian wars not so much for the accurate historical facts contained therein but primarily for the picture of greed and individualism so masterfully woven into it. Guicciardini's Storia d'Italia is of similar value. The essential accuracy of his work is not subject to question. He saw the situation for what it was, hence the value of portraying the Italian scene through Guicciardini's eyes

alone. It is important to give attention to his analysis of a situation which was of paramount significance to the political man that he was. He not only witnessed the trend of events and participated in them but he grasped their real meaning. His understanding of this situation, as a participant and later as an historian, contributed fundamentally to his disillusionment. In another sense, as the dissertation's subtitle indicates, Guicciardini reflected the pessimism, defeatism and disillusionment of his milieu.

Guicciardini contrasted the peaceful character of the peninsula from the Peace of Lodi[1] of 1454 to the period nearing 1494 and the thunderous change after that date. The common interests of the Italian states seemed predominant over their differences. In Guicciardini's judgment, Italy as a whole had not enjoyed a state of such complete repose and prosperity since the decline of the Roman Empire.[2]

Guicciardini addressed himself to a perplexing but basic problem, namely, what factors could account for the striking changes that he witnessed there. He discovered that the factors in favor of the maintenance of the status quo

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[1]A twenty-five year defensive alliance against the Turks was signed by the papacy, Naples, Florence and Milan. Though its elaborate machinery never materialized, the League gave expression to the conviction that both the common interests and those of each state demanded peace and unity within Italian borders, and it remained an ideal during the continuance of war. The small states hailed the Lodi Peace as a guarantee of their continued existence. In 1480 its League was formally renewed for a period of twenty-five years.

[2]Storia d'Italia, I, 2.

had been subject to change at the slightest provocation. None of the powers involved in the league of 1480 desired war, but still each tended to watch and to emulate any apparent increase in his neighbors' power,[3] with the undoubted exception of Guicciardini's Florentine hero, Lorenzo il Magnifico.[4]

In 1492 there occurred a series of events which Guicciardini found serious enough to upset the Italian calm.[5] The non-meddlesome Innocent VIII, whom Lorenzo advised "in all things,"[6] was succeeded in the papal chair by Alexander VI. Following the statesmanlike Lorenzo in Florence was his son Piero, strongly under the influence of the Orsini and unable to cooperate with his

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[3] Ibid., 4-5.

[4] Lorenzo was "come uno censore delli altri potentati." His reputation was so great in Italy that "no grave thing was deliberated without his will" and no serious discords were allowed to erupt, Guicciardini, "Elogio di Lorenzo de' Medici," Scritti politici, pp. 225, 227.

[5] Following Guicciardini, Symonds cited the significance of the year 1492 as "one of the most memorable dates in history." Charles VIII actually took the reins of the French kingdom into his own hands. Columbus discovered America. Roderigo Borgia became pope. With the conquest of Granada, Spain became a nation. Symonds judged that the three latter points were "no less fruitful of consequences to Italy than was the accession of Charles VIII." The discovery of America, followed in another six years by Vasco da Gama's exploration of the Indian seas, diverted the commerce of the world into new channels. Alexander, so Symonds continued, "made the Reformation and the Northern Schism certainties." It would be more accurate to indicate that his pontificate gave strong evidence of the vital and present need for Church reform. Lastly, the consolidation of Spain prepared the war for the "autocracy" of Charles V. "Thus the commercial, the spiritual, and the political sceptre fell in this one year from the grasp of the Italians," Despots, p. 423.

[6] Cf. "Elogio," p. 225: "Papa Innocenzio si lasciava in tutto governare a lui."

allies for the preservation of peace. His fundamental error, as Guicciardini saw it, was his strong friendship with Ferrante of Naples and his successor Alfonso. To counteract a possible alliance between Florence and Aragon, Lodovico of Milan then initiated positive measures.[7]

Each of these changes, Guicciardini noted, portended quick and steady future ones. An alliance like that of April 1493, geared to the common safety of the Pope, the Venetians and the Milanese and to active support of Lodovico in his duchy, could not settle the disturbed situation.[8] Lodovico, realizing that he had nothing in common with the Venetians, felt that he could not rely on the course of their actions; he conceived the notion of bringing the French into Italy to aid his Milanese forces in an invasion of Naples.[9] For his own reasons, Ercole d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara and Lodovico's father-in-law, also incited him to invite the French. With all the Italian states at variance, Ercole thought he could more easily recover the Polesine di Rovigo which he had earlier lost to the Venetians.[10]

To Guicciardini, the actions of Lodovico il Moro and Ercole d'Este were typical illustrations of the rampant individualism that wrecked Italy. It was nothing more than the vain and immediate advantage of certain ambitious Italian

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[7] Storia d'Italia, I, 5-8.

[8] Ibid., 16.

[9] Ibid., 17.

[10] Ibid., 30.

signori struggling for power that afforded Charles VIII and his successors the opportunity to press Angevin and Orleanist claims to Naples and Milan.[11]

Lodovico was one of Guicciardini's blackest villains. The Duke's lack of responsibility was particularly accountable for the unparalleled succession of disastrous events which Guicciardini saw as concrete evidence of "an angry and punitive divine judgment." It seemed clear to him that Lodovico must have harbored some realization of the flagrant combustion he was about to kindle, else why would he have desired Alexander as an accomplice through the Pope's acquiescence in these plans.[12] Upon Lodovico's death, the historian was moved to characterize his pan-Italian ambitions as too great to be confined within a narrow prison.[13] Guicciardini made his historical characterization with the same acuteness as Machiavelli, who wrote of Il Moro's opportunism: "Lodovico Sforza, as a shallow man, hopes, then fears, and anchors now to one thing, now to another."[14] From the policies of men such as these, the words of Machiavelli and Guicciardini seem to intimate, stem all the ills from which Italy suffers while they sadly observe. Feebleness and clumsiness resulted from princely attempts to be too subtle and too astute.

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[11] Ibid., 1. Princely selfishness is a constant theme in Guicciardini's writings.

[12] Ibid., 21, 30.

[13] Ibid., 393.

[14] Machiavelli, Le Opere, ed. F. Fanfani and L. Passerini, from Vol. II onwards, ed. L. Passerini and G. Milanesi, 6 vols. incomplete (Firenze, 1873-77), II, 138.

On the other hand, it seemed to Guicciardini that princely selfishness demonstrated the moral and political weakness of the peninsula. He explained even more basic reasons underlying its misery. Since Italy was divided into so many principalities and states, it was "next to impossible, on account of the various inclinations and interests of her rulers, that she should not be subjected to continual ferments."[15] Guicciardini understood that internal division could only breed disorder.

It was not surprising to him that the Neapolitans welcomed the French nor that no honorable conduct appeared in their kingdom's defense,[16] though "the known wisdom and understanding of the Italian princes" seemed baffled. As had all events in Italy from the arrival of Charles VIII at Asti in the autumn of 1494, the Neapolitan capitulation portended further disaster for all Italy.

The beginning of this Italian tragedy was referred to in Guicciardini's Dialogo. There it appeared even more dolorous inasmuch as it was presented as a prophecy made in the long past year of 1494. With an analysis of French fortunes in Italy were mingled musings on the Italian future. The Neapolitan undertaking had succeeded so well for the invaders that it did not seem that they could be easily expelled. Even if this were to happen, it was most unlikely that this gigantic effort would be over permanently. The power of France was very great, and the French had "tasted the sweetness" of Naples and

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[15] Storia d'Italia, IV, 1-2.

[16] Ibid., I, 103-106.

stirred up the populace. The occasions for their re-entry could no longer be lacking, for Italian unity was shattered and the chains which had held it firm irremediably broken.[17] With these invaders entered untold evils - new customs, new diseases and, above all, new and bloody methods of war. He wrote: "A door was left open for barbarian nations to invade and oppress us."[18]

And such a situation could now come about easily. A ruler with ambition, anger or fear would no longer hesitate to follow the example of Lodovico Sforza. Already Guicciardini's mouthpiece, Bernardo of the Dialogo, noted proposals for German and Spanish help against the French. Not only did he feel that there was no security against the French but also there was no doubt that the way was now opened in Italy for some other nation as well. So would come the "ultimate ruin," with either one victorious conqueror holding the peninsula in extreme servitude or its gradual slip into nothingness under the blows of

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[17]Ibid., 67, 113.

[18]The feeling so evident in these words is most evident in the original: "...la entrata loro in Italia e poi lo acquisto di questa prima impresa è stato sì felice, ch'io non so se el cacciargli riuscirà così facilmente; e quando pure riuscissi, dubito che el giuoco non sarà finito, perchè la potenzia di Francia è grande ed aranno già cominciato a imperare la via di venirci, gustato la dolcezza di questa provincia ed accesi gli animi, nè mancheranno le cagioni e le occasioni di farcegli venire, perchè la unione di Italia è conquassata, e sono rotti quelli vinculi che la tenevano ferma....," Dialogo e discorsi del reggimento di Firenze, ed. Roberto Palmarocchi (Bari, 1932), p. 71.

competing foreign groups.[19]

Guicciardini's attitude seemed defeatist from the very beginning. The Italians could in no way pull together against the monster which some of them had created. Internal discords are always dreadful, Guicciardini argued, but especially during a period of invasion. One burning issue was control of Pisa. This was central for Milan, Venice and Florence, and it brought still another "mediating" power into the fertile Italian arena, Emperor Maximilian.[20] Then too the bonds of the alliance of 1495 among Lodovico, the Venetians, the Pope and the Emperor were superficial and fundamentally weak, Guicciardini observed.[21]

His mouthpiece Bernardo agreed that the league would provide superficial

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[19]"Ognuno che arà ambizione, adegno o paura, non potendo satisfarsi o assicurarsi per altra via, cercherà di fare venire oltramontani, e quanto piú prosperamente sarà riuscito al duca tanto piú vi piglieranno animo gli altri. Vedete che ora per cacciare franzesi si comincia a parlare di tedeschi e di spagnuoli; pero non solo io non ci veggo sicurtà che e' franzesi non abbino stare o tornare in Italia, ma dubito ancora che non si apra la via a qualche altra nazione. E questa sarebbe la ruina ultima, perché mentre che ci staranno d'accordo, si mangeranno Italia; se verranno a rottura, la lacereranno; e se per sorte l'uno oltramontano caccerà l'altra, l'Italia restera in estrema servitú....," ibid., p. 72.

[20]Storia d'Italia, I, 126, 121-122.

[21]Ibid., 137-140.

unity but, were it to shatter, matters would be more confused than ever.[22]

Guicciardini particularly castigated Venice, whom the other Italian states feared. She made temporary alliances with them but terminated each one after the immediate danger had passed. Guicciardini easily pointed to past instances of Venetian ambition. After the death of Filippo Maria Visconte in 1447, in the times of "padri nostri,"[23] the Venetians had planned to usurp control of the Duchy of Milan as the first step of their domination of all Italy.[24] Their actions, Guicciardini agreed, had made the Venetian Republic "universally detested." Many Italians observed that haughty Venice had long set aside all regard to justice and public faith as she openly and opportunistically sought to subject the peninsula completely. When Venice lost much of her empire in 1509, a large segment of the Italian population experienced the "greatest pleasure."[25] Referring to Venetian ambitions for Pisa, Guicciardini explained that it was "their nature always to embrace such occasions."[26]

Yet Guicciardini well understood that Venice was one of the most venerable

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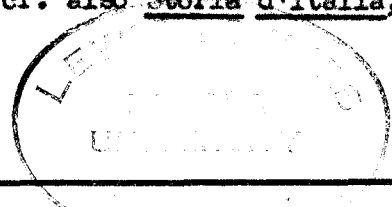
[22]Guicciardini's mouthpiece Bernardo stated: "Questa lega che ora si pratica, quando bene si conchiugga, durerá tanto unita quanto questo bisogno che corre ora; di poi restera ogni cosa piú confusa che mai," Dialogo, p. 71.

[23]Even during Filippo Maria's lifetime, Venice joined Florence against Filippo and took Bergamo and Brescia in 1425.

[24]"...e' viniziani pensorono di usurpare el ducato di Milano, che non era altro che la via di insignorirsi presto di tutta Italia....," Dialogo, p. 62.

[25]Storia d'Italia, II, 282.

[26]Dialogo, pp. 71-72; cf. also Storia d'Italia, II, 282-283.



members of the Italic body.[27] Her plight was strong evidence of the basic alteration in peninsular affairs which had taken place between 1494 and 1508. The mighty Republic had been assaulted in her eastern outposts from 1499 to 1503. The new route to the Indies struck at the old trade through the Levant, steadily undermining Venetian prosperity. Simultaneously, the steady Turkish advance left Venice the alternative of active opposition or accommodation. Generally the latter policy was followed, much to the disgust of other European states.

In this weakened condition, Guicciardini pointed out, Venice was prey to the similar ambitions of Italians and foreigners. The League of Cambrai of December 1508 was successful in its object of despoiling the envied Republic of her possessions on the mainland and in Apulia. To Guicciardini, the Venetian defeat by the French at Agnadello in May 1509 was critical for their position. Thereafter they surrendered Verona, Vicenza and Padua[28] to Maximilian, while Pope Julius occupied Ravenna, Rimini, Faenza and other Venetian possessions in the Romagna. To Ferdinand of Aragon fell Brindisi, Otranto and other Apulian towns.

Though the Powers had expected their assault to prove even more successful, Venice was obliged to remain on the defensive from that point onward. For

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[27]Still Guicciardini could not hide his admiration for the well-ordered government of the Venetian Republic. Cf. infra, pp. 394, 414.

[28]The Venetians rallied and retook Padua in July while Vicenza recalled them.

Guicciardini, the loss of the "greatest parts" of the Venetian empire and her fall from the "pinnacle of Italian power" had vital meaning and ramifications. For one thing, he noted, many Italians were shocked into a deeper realization of their crisis.

Guicciardini realized that, as Venice fell to the "lowest" degree of misery," she had no resources and few hopes. To him this meant nothing less than the absolute stultification of Venetian activity for the preservation of her own liberty. While some groups in Italy were secretly pleased at the Republic's "catastrophic fall from power," he explained, he agreed with the opposing group which showed "sounder judgment." For the latter, Venice's earlier attempts at Venetian domination receded into the background as their indignation increased over the dismal situation intensified by foreign intervention. "So great a city, so ancient a seat of liberty, which had diffused the splendor of the Italian name all over the world" was now driven under the heel of the foreigner. Guicciardini, not oblivious of earlier Venetian pride, here looked beyond superficialities. Now, he wrote, there remained no bridle to foreign fury, for "the most honorable member of the Italic body which had maintained the common fame above all others was struck dead and useless."[29] For Guicciardini, the defeat of Agnadello represented the danger for the common liberty.

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[29] Storia d'Italia, II, 282-283. Guicciardini's words are incisive and well chosen: Venice fell "in tanto esterminio."

In a broader sense, the years 1508 and 1509 witnessed the demoralization of Italy which had been growing since the invasions of Charles VIII and Louis XII. Guicciardini noted concrete evidence of this fact. During that period, the frequent disputes occasioning "wars and revolutions" terminated either bloodlessly or at the expense of the foreigners who had engineered them, and the princes rather than the populace bore the brunt of the suffering. The League of Cambrai seemed to carry with it a train of "cruel events" which overspread the face of Italy. Everywhere Italians were personally affected by seeing nothing but scenes of devastation, plunder and slaughter. This was attended by military licentiousness, the destruction of friends as well as foes and the wholesale desecration of sacred objects.[30] As the small fire of the Pisan war was dying down with Pisa's fall to Florence in 1509, a far worse conflagration was burning in Italy.

It was at this critical juncture of affairs that Guicciardini began to participate in the affairs that he was to record with such insight some twenty-five years later. Until his appointment as a diplomatic representative from his native city to the court of Spain, Florence had maintained no representative there. Now she realized, in view of the Holy League of 1511 against France, with whom she was embarrassingly allied, that it would be to her advantage to safeguard connections with both powers. Thus she could maintain neutrality. Piero Soderini, the gonfaloniere, desired the ambassador "to defend Florence against the accusations of the Pope" and to try to dispose Ferdinand of Aragon

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[30] Ibid., 245-246.

favorably towards the Republic.[31] As an Italian, Guicciardini understood that any peace must be a balanced one and not Spanish. The Italians were not expending their efforts merely to change masters, but the anti-French league evidenced their desire to free Italy from all "barbarians."[32]

Though the ambassador's assignment was a difficult one, calling for all the skill that he could draw upon, the Dieci[33] gave him no helpful advice. It was not unusual for a period of three months to pass without any communication from them while Guicciardini, on the contrary, referred frequently to that body.[34] The entire situation evidenced, as he testified, that there was a genuine bitterness in their relationships.[35]

Though Florence, traditionally friendly with France, decided in favor of

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[31]Otetea, Guichardin, pp. 40-44; cf. also Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 127, for the view that, while Soderini and his faction dictated Guicciardini's instructions, they were written and handed to him by the well-known Secretary of the Republic. Hence these two great political writers must have come face to face at this time.

[32]Letter to Jacopo Salviati, July 4, 1513, Carteggi, I, 194. The words are "non per mutare padrone."

[33]The Dieci di Balìa were a committee appointed whenever a war threatened and had the responsibility of complete management of affairs during the war period. In earlier Florentine history, this had been a leading function of the priors. Cf. Schevill, Florence, p. 342.

[34]Ridolfi, Guicciardini, pp. 48, 67.

[35]Letter to his brothers, Luigi and Jacopo, May 14, 1512, Carteggi, I, 52.

Louis XII after the French victory at Ravenna in April 1512,[36] the Spanish residence of Guicciardini had far-reaching effects on him personally. His experience in Spain from March 1512 to December 1514, had led him to realize the folly of the Julian league with its desire to bring peace to Italy by setting Aragonese against French, already at fierce odds, and by having "barbarians more than Italians spend their blood against the French." He feared that it would not be so easy to expel the already-weakened Spanish troops with Italy's own arms and forces. Instead of praise for the sentiments which inspired the Holy League of 1511, Guicciardini could only indicate the superficiality of Pope Julius II's title, "Deliverer of Italy," and the hopelessness of the task that this suggested. The rampant internal animosities would make any cooperation difficult to achieve. Further, the undistinguished forces of Italy, without adequate leadership, could not drive the conqueror from Italy.[37]

This point was clear to Guicciardini from 1495, when Naples had fallen to the French. From his youthful years, he showed intense interest in military questions, for these were intimately linked with the strength of a state. The Spanish residence crystallized these views. The Italian soldiery consisted of a heterogeneous mixture of peasants and men of low social strata, all subjects

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[36]Guicciardini complained that Machiavelli had given him a one-sided account of this battle. Letter to his brother Luigi, August 22, 1512, ibid., p. 90. Cf. also Ariosto's words on Ravenna in praise of the Lily which defeated the "rich Acorns of Gold," in Julius' coat-of-arms, and "broke the yellow and vermillion staff," referring to the Spanish colors, Orlando Furioso, 14:2-10. Ariosto of course had praise for the French with whom his patron, Alfonso d'Este, was allied, ibid.

[37]Storia d'Italia, III, 129-130.

of different rulers and seldom subjects of the prince they served in battle. Unlike the French army, for example, which fought in well-organized squadrons, the Italians dispersed themselves in the open country and retired to the river-banks or ditches at any danger of attack.[38] Guiccardini intimated that this was cowardly action.

Guicciardini understood that the "vital spirits" of Italy were quickly being sapped.[39] She simply did not have the resources, military or spiritual, to take unnecessary and unwise risks like the League of 1511. In 1512, Guicciardini's conservative personality did not allow him to be an advocate of any plan that was rash or hastily conceived. He placed himself in the "wiser group" who believed it would be better to shoulder the lesser burden of foreign habitation than to invite ultimate disaster by unwise action. God or a happy turn of fortune would undoubtedly bring about a more opportune time for action than the present afforded.[40]

To Guicciardini, the most effective remedy seemed to be a "balance of power" between the French and Spanish rulers.[41] He felt that this alone would

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[38] Ibid., I, 71-73.

[39] Ibid., III, 129-130.

[40] Ibid., Referring to an event of 1530, he wrote that "the success was no greater than the rashness of the resolution had been extraordinary." At the same time, however, he understood that tension sometimes goads groups to hasty action, "if those counsels can be called rash which are prompted by the last necessity," ibid., V, 296.

[41] During the summer following the French victory at Ravenna and their sudden decline thereafter, Guicciardini wrote from Spain that the Spaniards were still watching the French: "Gli sarebbe dunque piaciuto veder declinare Francia ma non tanto che gli Spagnoli non le avessero ad avere rispetto....," Letter to Jacopo Salviati, July 27, 1512, Carteggi, I, 198. This was the "balance of power" which he too was then advocating.

secure the freedom of those Italian areas not yet subject to foreign control. Otherwise the battles of the powers for supremacy on Italian soil might be superseded by cooperative action to subject Italy.[42]

Not yet thirty years of age in 1512, as yet without years of the observance of shrewd and conniving rulers and diplomats, Guicciardini had the political acumen and the natural good sense which enabled him to note the uncertainty of Ferdinand's proposal to tighten Spanish relations with Florence.[43] As matters were tending, Guicciardini confided to his father that he judged the maintenance of "buona amicizia" with the Spanish King to be good for Florence, but he was not at all sure that her citizens were "ready to throw themselves into Ferdinand's arms." The King, and even those not so highly esteemed, would look first to individual advantage in spite of protestations of friendship.[44] It is important to stress that Guicciardini saw this individualism operative both within the peninsula and in the ranks of foreign rulers. There was no trust anywhere. While rulers of all times look to their individual advantage, but Guicciardini viewed this situation as excessive within his own age.

Guicciardini understood too that, while Ferdinand plied his stock trade in

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[42] Storia d'Italia, III, 129-130.

[43] Letter to the Dieci and to Piero Guicciardini, September 17, 1512, Carteggi, I, 102.

[44] Letter of Guicciardini to his father Piero, December 14, 1512, ibid., 133. These words should be particularly noted: "...Sarentene da lui e dalli altri stimati meno; nè fate conto che il mostrare amore o fede abbi ne' bisogni vostri a farvi valere di lui, se non quanto lo conducessi lo interesse suo schietto; e chi facessi il conto altrimento potrebbe trovarsene ingannato, perchè qui si va solo drieto allo utile, sanza respetto di cosa alcuna."

papal criticisms, the King was not oblivious that Julius' anti-French endeavors could benefit him as well. One strong individual could well recognize another. Guicciardini did not hide his admiration for Ferdinand's methods. From this period onward, the ruler who failed to keep his promise of safeguarding Florence, the incomparably successful Catholic King, became Guicciardini's model prince just as Cesare Borgia was Machiavelli's. This face is important for an understanding of Guicciardini's mentality, for he saw in Ferdinand the very qualities that were lacking in the Italian rulers.

Guicciardini was particularly interested in the military establishment of Spain and in the moral calibre of her people.[45] He stressed that the proud, militaristic Spaniards were not unified and independent. The underlying theme of the "Relazione" builds upon this fact. Because the land had just, but severe rulers like Ferdinand, capable of cooperating with fortune and of imposing an iron-clad, energetic discipline, she could look ahead to still greater power and glory by casting her views outward. This she had envisioned in sending armies into Italy to struggle for control of the peninsula.[46] As an Italian, Guicciardini did not look kindly of course upon this occurrence, but he could not refrain from expressing his admiration for a land so ably run that such a feat was possible.

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[45] Cf. these writings in Scritti autobiografici, pp. 101-124, pp. 125-146. His discussion centers on the broad areas of Aragon, Castile and Portugal. Other areas of the Iberian peninsula he handled as subdivisions.

[46] Ibid.

He explained that "a' tempi nostri" Spain showed itself very enlightened, for, with her consolidation, she left the obscurity that had seemed natural to her. The glory of her king and his outstanding deeds were known to all the world,[47] but Guicciardini continued to elaborate on his virtues. He testified to Ferdinand's kindliness yet kingliness in his personal audiences. Before he spoke, he weighed every word and made certain that his expressed thoughts were like to those of good and wise men. Though excellent in arms, he did not neglect religion, in him, according to Guicciardini, "very great." Guicciardini made no judgment on the greed commonly attributed to Ferdinand. Perhaps a tight hold on Spanish pursestrings was necessary, for there were many expenses in governing so large and important a kingdom.

Above all, Guicciardini was impressed by Ferdinand's basic method of statecraft. He handled all matters secretly, and this indicated wisdom. He conferred on no matter unless by necessity. A patient man, he lived in an orderly atmosphere under a strict schedule. Thus his desire that great matters and small pass through his hands could readily be actuated.[48] His subjects were by no means always aware of this complexity of their king's statecraft. He made certain that any measure he desired to carry out would be proclaimed first in order to win popular favor for it. This made it appear that the King was simply following popular wishes.[49] Nor did Guicciardini hesitate to point out that

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[47] Ibid., p. 137.

[48] Ibid., p. 138.

[49] Ricordi, I, 51.

Ferdinand "gave lustre to all his enterprises" by causing it to appear that all were directed to the defense of the Church or to the spread of the Christian faith rather than to his own majesty or security.[50]

Most significantly, Guicciardini did not fail to note that fortuna was not lacking to a man of such virtù. Already in 1512 two concepts fundamental to Renaissance thinking were intermingled in his mind with all the complexities of Cinquescento statecraft.

Guicciardini's observation of the critical nature of 1509, based largely upon the Venetian defeat, proved its accuracy in succeeding years. No longer did he look for any silver lining in the Italian cloud. Any hopes the Venetians had at the beginning of 1513 for a return of "old times" were brutally shattered.[51] Papal cooperation with the Emperor against Venice in that year led to further devastation of her territory. Guicciardini found the situation more piteous than ever, for the Italian soldiers, including those of the Pope, were as savage as the "barbarian" troops. Guicciardini, sympathizing with the low Venetian morale, explained how inconceivable it was that a small army could so outrageously insult the glorious name of the Republic of Saint Mark.[52]

With the imperial-Venetian accord of 1516, however, the nobility and population of Venice again expected the return of better times for they

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[50] Ibid., II, 142.

[51] Storia d'Italia, III, 241.

[52] Ibid., 291-292.

believed that conflict was finally at an end.[53] Guicciardini stressed that this general feeling existed throughout the Italian states, underscored by the removal of all occasions for a war between the French King against the Emperor and Catholic King. This peace among all the potentates of Christendom did indeed, Guicciardini wrote, seem to have crushed all the seeds of war and discord in Italy.[54] But this could not be, he pointed out, because the princes of Italy had not come to realize the folly of the common policy of pursuing their own desires with foreign assistance. As Lodovico il Moro before him, Francesco Maria della Rovere in 1517 requested the Spanish troops in Verona, in addition to the French and Venetian infantry, to aid him in the recovery of the states from which the Pope had driven him that summer. Nor did the "author of these new tumults" find it difficult to persuade these foreign troops to act with him. Accustomed as they were in the many wars to plundering towns and ravaging countries, to them "nothing was more distasteful than the peace to which all the affairs of Italy, they saw, had a definite tendency."[55]

At the very period when peace seemed to be a possibility, 1516, Guicciardini began his long term of papal-Medicean service, until 1523 governor of Modena with jurisdiction over Reggio and Parma and their territories, and finally president of the Romagna under Clement VII, from 1524 to 1527. Certainly he was occupied with detailed and burdensome daily tasks but he never

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[53] Ibid., 403-404.

[54] Ibid., IV, 1.

[55] Ibid., 2.

lacked a view of the total picture. The penetrating vision that he displayed while in papal service served him well when he wrote the Storia d'Italia some fifteen years later.

Guicciardini explained the significance of 1521, when Italy became embroiled in wars greater in scope, duration and danger than those past. He described the ambition and power of Francis I and Charles V, their hatred and jealousy, and their emulation of each other. What bothered Guicciardini was the fact that Italy could have enjoyed even a longer period of her rather dubious "peace." No urgent reason existed for a major war in 1521. The balance of the two princes' power within Italy was almost even; it would have been very difficult for one to injure the other without the assistance of some of the Italian powers. King Francis, then allied with the Venetians, seemed sufficiently secure in his possession of Milan. Emperor Charles seemed well in control of Naples, and a French attack upon it would have been very difficult without papal concurrence. Neither the French nor the Swiss mercenaries were apprehensive of any imperial movement from the southern kingdom or from Germany.[56] In Guicciardini's judgment, it was once again the story of an Italian prince, Pope Leo X, who broke the peace.[57]

While Guicciardini accused Leo of unwise action in 1521, he certainly recognized that Leo had to act. Italy could no longer be free from barbarians. The diplomat who spoke these words was clearly Guicciardini's mouthpiece, and

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[56] Ibid., 77-78.

[57] Cf. infra, pp. 117-118.

he continued that if there had to be a conflict, it was much better for all the peoples of Italy that there be two powers involved rather than one. In their competition would consist the safety of the Italian states.[58]

In any event, by 1525, the wisest course of action seemed to be an allied league, headed by Clement VII, against the power of Charles V. Guicciardini had foreseen some of the essential faults of the proposed League while it was under discussion. He explained that in its leadership and its armies were a great variety of interests and motives so that disorders, indignation, resentments and distrust were bound to arise. Guicciardini pointed at both the papacy and the Venetian Republic as major examples. Church weapons had "naturally blunt edges" and those of the Venetians were no keener. He asked, if each were "a bad cutter" when acting separately, what could be expected when they acted together?[59] Further, Guicciardini knew that in allied ranks there would be a lack of promptness to take advantage of favorable opportunities and to resist stumbling blocks to potential success.[60]

Guicciardini did not lose any opportunity to show that the Venetians had

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[58]"Se la fortuna buona di Italia avessi potuto piú che la imprudenzia di Lodovico Sforza, e poi, che la nostra o troppa paura o troppa cupidità, non sarebbono oltramontani in Italia, e questa sarebbe la felicità di tutta questa provincia e spezialmente la nostra, che eravamo temuti da li altri, ed in fatto davamo, si puo dire, le legge a tutti; ma poi che le cose sono scorse in luogo che non si puo sperare che Italia sia sanza barberi, e molto meglio per noi e per li altri italiani che ce ne sia due, che uno, perché la emulazione che aranno questi dua potenti insieme, sará la guardia de' manco potenti, ed in spezie, ciascuna fara a gara di intrattenere la nostra republica, perché in tal caso troppo importerá la potenzia nostra," ibid., p. 123.

[59]Storia d'Italia, IV, 326.

[60]Ibid.

not completely learned their lessons. He became deeply aware of this fact during the 1520's. He analyzed their policy, continually fluctuating in 1525, for they stood aloof as they sought to discover what was most favorable to them. He explained that they would stand undecided as long as they could, and, if forced to take a stand, they would take that which they found most to their selfish advantage. They certainly would not look to the welfare of all Italy.[61]

In spite of the difficulties which the League would face from its inception, Guicciardini understood that it was this or nothing. While laboring in the Romagna, he had heard the usual rumors and reports of action on both sides. On public affairs, de rebus publicis, he admitted he did not know what to say. Upon seeing everyone opposed to taking bold but necessary action, the only course possible, he had "lost his bearings." He wrote:

> I never heard of anyone who when he saw a storm coming did not attempt to take cover, except ourselves, who prefer to wait for it in the middle of the road without any protection. So...we shall not be able to say that government has been taken from us, but that turpiter elapsa sit de manibus.[62]

In December he learned that the Pope wanted his services in still another capacity. This turned out to be the job of conducting the papal-imperial armies in war, the "bold course" to which he had referred. Later, when he was assured of his position, he regretted that he had delayed so long in accepting it. He explained that "the greatest satisfaction I can have from my service

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[61] Ibid., 302-303.

[62] Letter to Machiavelli, December 26, 1525, Lettere familiari, p. 468.

is to see that Your Holiness does not intend to wait to be conquered."[63]

Machiavelli too heard rumors regarding the anti-imperialist alliance under discussion and on a possible agreement between Charles and Francis as well. In January 1526, before the conclusion of the latter, Machiavelli had news of both. Apparently he had learned that an Italian league was being negotiated with France. This he favored. Subsequently word was received that King and Emperor had reached an agreement, but Machiavelli did not seem to know that it was not yet final as of January. He judged that Charles made this agreement so that France would break with the Pope and, when this was done, the Emperor would then not honor his word with France.[64]

Machiavelli wrote at length on imperial politics. He always described Charles as a wily diplomat who had one objective, to make himself supreme. While he held King Francis prisoner, he could tempt now France and now the Pope with the hope of an agreement without ever breaking off negotiations or bringing them to a conclusion. Machiavelli wrote of the Emperor that "when he sees that the Italians are about to join with France, he takes up the negotiations with France again so that they do not reach an agreement, and he wins the game."[65] Machiavelli was inclined to think that the Emperor would never release the King, whatever their agreement.

For a while, Machiavelli seemed to be right. Guicciardini wrote later

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[63]Letter to Clement VII, December, 1525, Opere inedite, VIII, 355.

[64]Letter to Guicciardini, January 3, 1526, Lettere familiari, p. 470.

[65]Ibid.

that, despite the manifestations of peace and friendship, Francis was tightly guarded and given no increased freedom of movement. As he put it: "At the same time Francis was caressed like a brother, he was guarded like a prisoner." It was clear that this was "a concord full of discord, an affinity without affection," for "the old jealousies and contests between them [Francis and Charles] would on every occasion prevail over all regard for ties and alliances."[66] Both Machiavelli and Guicciardini could estimate things well. In Charles' next step, which Machiavelli had foretold, he attempted to deal with the Pope.

Later writers have followed Guicciardini's incisive account signalling the course of events which logically spelled Italy's political doom. Guicciardini agreed that the King of France was exclusively prompted by his own self-interest. When Francis saw that the Emperor would not change the Madrid agreement and that to delay entry into the League any longer might induce the Pope to make other plans, he joined with the Venetians and Duke Francesco Sforza. He hoped that this alliance, concluded at Cognac on May 17, 1526, would give the impression that he was in complete control of the situation and that, with this realization, the Emperor might in some way become more flexible.[67] By acting now as "a sensible man," Machiavelli wrote, Francis "could not prevent the Emperor from being made to look a fool."[68]

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[66] Storia d'Italia, IV, 351.

[67] Ibid., 14-16. Cf. also Carteggi, VIII, 188, 191, for Guicciardini's explanation that the League of Cognac was concluded on May 22 but at Rome the news was that all difficulties were resolved at the end of the day on the 17th.

[68] Letter to Guicciardini, March 15, 1526, Lettere familiari, p. 476.

Though Francis delayed ratification and failed to cooperate by sending troops and money, Charles showed fear of the coalition. He tantalized the Pope with hopes of peace for Italy if only Clement would not interfere in affairs between Francis and him. But the Pope would no longer listen and all things tended to a serious break in papal-imperial relations.[69] The Pope committed himself to the League of Cognac and the balance of power was destroyed, but almost insurmountable problems remained for the allies.

Yet hope sometimes makes one speak in glowing terms of great projects with noble ends. Guicciardini, as lieutenant-general of the pontifical armies, wrote that the principal aim of this "Holy League" of Cognac was the attainment of "the general welfare of all Italy and the universal good of Christianity."[70] He expressed the opinion of all patriots when he spoke of the war as a "holy and necessary national event."[71]

It was one thing to conclude a formal League, but there remained serious problems if the League was to have any practical value. Guicciardini realized this. He and Machiavelli stressed that the first order of business was to find a commander, who, by his name and his ability, could inspire confidence.[72] Of Giovanni de' Medici, the final choice of the allies, Machiavelli wrote:

> I believe everyone is agreed that among Italians there is no leader whom the soldiers more willingly follow or of whom the Spaniards have

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[69] Storia d'Italia, V, 19-22.

[70] Letter to Latino Giovenale, August 11, 1526, Carteggi, IX, p. 124. The words are "...per commune salute di tucta Italia, anzi bene universale della Cristianità."

[71] Opere inedite, I, 393.

[72] Storia d'Italia, V, 16-19.

more fear or are more cautious. Everyone feels that Signor Giovanni is brave, impetuous, with great ambitions and capable of bold decisions.[73]

But Guicciardini, like Machiavelli, was aware of the continuing need for intensive planning and for constant enthusiasm and cooperation on the part of the allies to make a success of the venture. Though he was willing to obey the Pope and the Venetians, Guicciardini found himself wondering about his personal reason for working so hard![74] To the Otto[75] he explained that his "infinite occupations," unimaginable to those who did not witness them, were the only reason he did not report daily.[76] He spent only a little time on

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[73]Letter to Guicciardini, March 15, 1526, Lettere familiari, p. 476. Cf. Storia d'Italia, V, 60, for Guicciardini's concurrence in the view of Machiavelli. After having observed this soldier in action, he commented on his ability to infuse light into a group despised before they came under his command. Cf. ibid., 92, for a laudatory estimate of Giovanni de' Medici's character and career after his death.

[74]Letter to Giamatteo Giberti, July 27, 1526, Opere inedite, I, 46. Note Guicciardini's languid words: "...non so a che fine io mi duri tanta fatica ...." With Guicciardini himself, Giberti, the pro-French counsellor of Clement VII, had been one of the moving spirits in the promotion of the League of Cognac. Pastor observes that Giberti had deceived himself in holding that the League of Cognac could settle the issue of the freedom or the perpetual slavery of Italy. The stipulations agreed on were such that, even if the League's armies would prove successful, the influence then accruing to France in Italian affairs would be incompatible with Italian independence, History of the Popes, IX, 306.

[75]The Otto di Pratica, a permanent committee for speedy and efficient action in foreign and military matters, was instituted in Florence by Lorenzo de' Medici in 1480 and reestablished with the Medici restoration of 1512, Schevill, History of Florence, pp. 396-397, 475. This council had the functions of the Dieci during the periods of Medici domination, Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 263, n. 21.

[76]Letter to the Otto di Pratica, August 2, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 77-78.

entertainment but found it important to keep his mental balance. Guicciardini told Machiavelli that the performance of his comedy, the "Mandragola," unlike a speedy solution of Italy's political woes, is something "within our power so that one is not wasting one's time thinking about it.[77] Entertainment, he continued, is "more necessary than ever in these turbulent times."

Guicciardini's burdens were well-understood by the League in Florence. Machiavelli's manifold duties included military matters, and he urged the Pope to organize the papal army along the lines of the democratic-type militias already inaugurated in Florence. But Guicciardini did not find such a system wise or feasible.[78]

The allied leaders hoped against hope that the League's difficulties, so apparent from the beginning, could be surmounted. Guicciardini wrote later that the articles of the alliance "without doubt should have been more distinct and the security for their observance better established." Hindsight had made one point very clear; the war should not have begun in the spring of 1526, before the Swiss allies had started to march and all provisions were actually on hand. Guicciardini constantly complained of the Swiss delay and the lack of provisions. Years later he explained the League might also have been STRENGTHENED BY INCLUDING THE English King whom the allies had not approached

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[77]Letter to Machiavelli, December 26, 1525, Lettere familiari, p. 468.

[78]Guicciardini saw too many faults with these militas. Cf. infra. pp. 56-59.

on account of the distance![79] But it was the warning sounded by Machiavelli on the very day the League was formed that told Italy what she needed to survive. In spite of all complications and problems, he bade citizens to be cautious and dedicated: "Liberata diuturna cura Italiam."[80] Yet Guicciardini found it difficult to imagine "that victory would be lacking to us if they [the allies] would do their duty with promptness."[81] Somewhat paradoxically, Guicciardini wanted to hope, but the desire to be optimistic could not destroy his more basic pessimism.

Yet very early in the history of the League of Cognac, Guicciardini was shaken by the Duke Urbino's retreat from the gates of Milan in July when it appeared possible for the allies to take the city.[82] This would have constituted a very significant success. While realizing the plight of the Milanese, he criticized the selfish motive which guided their actions, namely, they wanted to save their own necks and were willing to cooperate with the resident imperial soldiery if this could be accomplished. On the other hand, Guicciardini was quite sympathetic. The Milanese had too many masters, hence too many burdens. Not only were they subject to the exactions of the Constable of Bourbon but also to those of the League's soldiers now encamped around the city. Guicciardini was highly critical of the allied troops as he pointed out

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[79] Storia d'Italia, V, 11.

[80] Letter to Guicciardini, May 17, 1526, Lettere familiari, p. 489.

[81] Letter to Bishop Altobello Averoldi, July 28, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 58.

[82] Cf. Guicciardini's account of Urbino's retreat in Storia d'Italia, V, 36-41.

that Milanese relief at their arrival now turned to hatred.[83]

In the months of tension following the formation of the League of Cognac, Guicciardini's correspondence reflected his concern over certain matters which, had they been handled well, could have given his side an easy victory. Aside from the manifest coldness of the French King in the prosecution of the war,[84] Guicciardini complained most of the Swiss delay. He looked back upon the optimism of the allies at the beginning of the war and blamed the Swiss for preventing an early victory. He pointed out with an obvious pride that an imperial army up to the present unconquered had been on the verge of defeat at the hands of the Italian forces alone.[85] Nor were the Milanese free from guilt that matters did not turn out well for the League. When the Swiss did not come

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[83]Cf. ibid., 45-52.

[84]Guicciardini made reference to this in several letters. The "good words and hopes of the King are not enough, for effects are needed....," Letter to Roberto Acciauoli, August 3, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 82. (Acciauoli was the papal representative in France). Cf. also Guicciardini's frank words: "La freddeza di Francia è manifestissima....," Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 9, 1526, ibid., 112, and another reference to "la freddeza di Francia," August 22, 1526, ibid., 174.

[85]Letter to Uberto Gambara, August 3, 1526, ibid., 83. Cf. also letter to Roberto Acciauoli, August 3, 1526, ibid., 82, for Guicciardini's note that, when opportunities (di fare faccende) have once been lost, things do not always turn out the way one wants them to (le quali non tornano sempre quando l'huomo le desidera).

in time, they lost their enthusiasm.[86] With the passing of many "beautiful occasions" for victory, Guicciardini foresaw that the war was likely to be long and difficult and to cost much money. He stated frankly that he did not know how long the allies could carry on.[87] Each day he awaited new disaster for, every time the Swiss failed to reply to new requests for military aid, trouble occurred.[88] And he believed that a long war was not less a curse for the imperialists than for the allies. He confessed that he would hold for a long war if he was certain that, by tiring the adversary, the League could achieve victory, but he knew it would have been better to win in the beginning.[89]

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[86] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, ibid., 69. The reference to the League army's position at the time of the Milanese surrender to the imperialists on July 24 is as follows: "/Milan/ fu bactuto innanzi passassimo e fiumi."

[87] Letter to Uberto Gambara, August 3, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 83.

[88] Letter to Roberto Acciauoli, August 22, 1526, ibid., 168. Note Guicciardini's personal anxiety in his responsibilities: "... aspecto ogni mactina qualche grandissimo disordine." Cf. also his words to Giberti: "È vero che siamo in grande confusione et in grande soma de' Svizeri, nata per la varietà et difficultà del levargli et in questo ci bisogna fare qualche resolutione....," letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 22, 1526, ibid., 174.

[89] Letter to Jacopo Salviati, August 16, 1526, ibid., 140. Note Guicciardini's words: "...et che in dubio, io non sia per accostarmi sempre alla parte più sicura. Per la quale ragione, se io fussi certo che con la lungheza fussimo per stracchara gli inimici et havere la victoria, loderei questo cammino per el più sicuro, quando bene io cognoscessi che anche la via breve fussi sicura. Ma io ho sempre giudicato et giudico che la lungheza sia non manco pericolosa per noi che per loro," ibid., 139-140.

The many difficulties stemming from Francis I's defeat at Pavia and the innumerable problems since the formation of the League of Cognac in May 1526 presented Machiavelli, like Guicciardini, the opportunity to make certain observations on military matters. Within Florence he had already organized a democratic-type militia.[90] Machiavelli was convinced that, if the rest of Italy used this system, it would help the allied cause.

His interest in military matters in connection with the problems of the Italian states resulted in his Art of War. At the critical juncture of mid-1525, he decided, on the basis of the evident success of his ideas in Florence, not only to seek support for his Istoria in Rome but also personally to acquaint Clement VII with his military proposals. Not only the Pope but also his advisers, the Cardinals Salviati, Sadoleto and Schomberg admitted their value.[91]

Machiavelli was sent to Guicciardini in Faenza with an urgent papal brief, which explained in the main that extraordinary diseases demand extraordinary remedies. On the inauguration of militias, Guicciardini was reminded, "depends the safety of the papal states as well as that of the whole of Italy and

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[90]For an account of the working of the native army and the difficulties Machiavelli encountered in attempting to revive a martial ardor which had perished during the employment of mercenary troops, cf. Francis A. Hyett, Florence: Her History and Art to the Fall of the Republic (London, 1903), p. 468. Guicciardini's mouthpiece, Bernardo del Nero, stressed this very point, Dialogo del reggimento, pp. 90-93.

[91]Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 213.

practically the whole of Christendom."[92] Guicciardini was informed in advance of Machiavelli's arrival by his agent at the court of Rome, Cesare Colombo, so he had his answer ready. Already on June 16, 1525, he wrote to Colombo: "Ask on my behalf to what end the Pope plans this, for, if he intends it as a remedy for present dangers, it is a provision which cannot come in time."[93] Guicciardini's complaints on the Italian military situation in 1526 were the more pitiful in that the hopelessness of the situation had been evident for over a year!

After Machiavelli presented his business to Guicciardini, the latter explained that no one could deny the practicality of the militia system. If this plan could be realized, it would be one of the best things the Pope ever did.[94] The cold and cautious realism of Guicciardini, Clement's principal military adviser, revealed itself. His task of working out a system of defense against the imperial forces in Lombardy was mammoth but no less problematical was his work in the Romagna.

From experience, Guicciardini knew the lack of respect for authority and the factiousness of the population in the papal states.[95] The Romagna was by

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[92]The brief is included in Monumenta saeculi XVI, historiam illustrantia. Vol. I, Clementis VII epistolae per Sadoletum scriptae, ed. P. Balan (Innsbruck, 1885), no. 110. It is printed also in Oreste Tommasini, La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli (Roma, 1883-1911), II, 1150.

[93]Opere inedite, VIII, 236.

[94]Ibid., 266-269.

[95]Guicciardini set forth his doubts to Machiavelli on the wisdom of arming the people of the Romagna in a letter of June 19, 1525. Cf. T. Pandolfi, "Giovan Matteo Giberti e l'ultima difésa della libertà d'Italia negli anni 1521-1525," Archivio della R. società romana di storia patria, XXXIV (1911), 209-212. Cf. also M. Brion, Machiavel (Paris, 1948), pp. 387-393.

far the worst example. Guicciardini's attempts to impose respect for laws and to administer justice rigorously were continually interrupted by the Curia, often through favoritism.[96] He struck at the strong Ghibelline faction at Forlì, the most infected of all cities in the Romagna, and at their influential patron, the Cardinal of Aracoeli, Cristoforo Numai, who had complained of Guicciardini's decisiveness. In defense of his policy, Guicciardini avowed he was impartial. If he thought that the activities of a Guelph cardinal were creating troubles in areas under his jurisdiction, he would punish him too.[97]

He was loyal to the Pope when he assured him that, if the plan were to be put into effect, he would devote himself to it completely. His reply showed, however, that victory depended not on verbal support of a nebulous plan but on the working out of countless military details:

> ...if it is to succeed, Your Holiness must do the same; either you should not begin it, or you should go into it with your mind firmly made up to help in everything that is needed, to overcome all difficulties, and to regard it as more important than anything else.[98]

Clement tabled Machiavelli's proposals, though they looked tempting to many as a life-saving measure for Italy in mid-1525. Perhaps Machiavelli's plan had merit but, at so crucial a juncture, those responsible for policy and its execution could handle only what was most immediate. And Clement would have had either the time nor the determination to support the slow progress of a

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[96]Cf. Ridolfi, Guicciardini, p. 193.

[97]Letter to Clement VII, June 18, 1524, Carteggi, VII, 88.

[98]Opere inedite, VIII, 266-269.

national militia.

The most immediate problem of the Pope and the League was the Duchy of Milan. In the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, it had been considered as "una bilancia di tutta Italia."[99] Now in July 1526, as the fortress of Milan was near surrender to the imperialists, Guicciardini again wrote on the importance of the north. Lombardy was the weight (el pondo) of the war. Dangers to Rome and to Siena were secondary because the nerve center was in the north.[100] Milan above all was worthy of all allied efforts.

When Guicciardini saw the Pope's continuing indecision, he could not refrain from thinking how he would handle the situation. If he were Clement, he would hold back yet not precipitate himself into "pace dannosa, instabile et dishonorevole." "Non siamo in termini di disperatione," Guicciardini pointed out, but one has to be resolute in spirit and to force oneself to solve the difficulty.[101]

Not only was Guicciardini particularly distressed over the Duke of Urbino's retreat two weeks earlier but even more so over the fainthearted attempts of the League's army to relieve the fortress of Milan. After its surrender to the imperialists in July, Guicciardini wrote that it would have been easy enough to hold the fortress and even to take all of Milan. It was evident that Urbino

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[99] Storie fiorentine, p. 73.

[100] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 71. Guicciardini's words are: "el puncto è tucto qua...."

[101] Ibid.

either did not know how to accomplish this or he did not wish to do so.[102] He criticized the diffidence of Urbino as a thing which communicated itself and had spread to the whole camp.[103] Then too, Guicciardini pointed out, the cooperation of the Swiss troops might have given the League victory within a month. Yet he saw that the arrival of the allied troops had at least one good effect; it led the imperialists through fear to agree that Sforza could freely come into the League's camp at Lodi. Guicciardini noted that this was a change, for the imperialists had always considered control of the Duke more important for their success in Milan than control of the fortress.[104]

Urbino and Francesco Sforza agreed that, because of the surrender of the fortress, new plans were necessary for the war, and both pressed for an attack on Cremona. Guicciardini argued now that bold plans do not necessarily spell success,[105] for "the situation of affairs affords little hope of victory." He confessed he did not see how the Pope could conclude a peace offer, should one be made, that was not injurious or perilous to the allies.[106]

First, he pointed out, the loss of the castle of Milan had diminished their reputation while the freeing of Sforza meant little. That section of the enemy which originally guarded the castle was free. Many of the important

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[102] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 27, 1526, ibid., 44. Note Guicciardini's words: /Urbino/ "non ha saputo o non ha voluto farlo."

[103] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, ibid., 69.

[104] Letter to Accursio Grineo, July 28, 1526, ibid., 57.

[105] Storia d'Italia, V, 58-60.

[106] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 70.

citizens now fled, especially the merchants who found Milan too disorderly.[107]

Waiting for the Swiss troops made it very difficult to send aid to Cremona.[108] If Guicciardini could judge from his vantage point, all Lombardy, despairing of the French coming, began to doubt the King's sincerity. Already many of the exiles took steps to settle their differences with Bourbon. He pointed to the action of the Biraghi and other important Guelphs.[109] In view of the complexity of these weighty matters, of necessity so interwoven, Guicciardini felt that Italy would probably have had more security if Francis were to hold Milan than if it would be in the hands of a weak Duke, an imperialist pawn. This opinion, he recalled, had long been held by Jacopo.[110]

He knew also that money and provisions were needed for the Cremonese expedition. Though the "will not to win" dominated the papal camp, Guicciardini now expressed reasonable hopes of victory. The anti-imperialist operation which had once seemed "easy and secure" had become "difficult and dangerous." With good organization and sufficient money, the allies could hope for success.[111] But Clement did not have the resources for a long war, and Guicciardini's own

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[107] Letter to the Otto di Pratica, August 2, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 70.

[108] Ibid., 79.

[109] Letter to Roberto Acciauoli, August 3, 1526, ibid., 82-83.

[110] Letter to Cesare Colombo, August 6, 1526, ibid., 101. The reference is to Cardinal Jacopo Salviati.

[111] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, ibid., 69. Note Guicciardini's clever use of words: "...se io non mi inganno, e in termine che, se havessimo buono governo et la spesa ordita non ci superchiassi, non ci può ragionevolmente mancare la victoria."

desperation in the late summer of 1526 centered largely on the lack of finances.[112]

Near the end of August Guicciardini, still in the field, did not know where to turn for assistance. The signatories to the League of Cognac continued to fail their obligations, military and monetary. His frequent requests to the Datario[113] and to Salviati had met with unsatisfactory responses, and he was greatly concerned. Everything would collapse if money were not quickly forthcoming. Expenses in camp were great and they were rendered greater because of Francis' failure to contribute. Guicciardini reminded His Holiness that soldiers were not paid "with designs in air." Above all, it was necessary to have the money in time lest, to all the other disorders, another would be added, that of having provided too late.[114] There was no time to quibble in so vital a concern, for upon cold cash depended the preservation of the Holy See, Clement's own safety, the welfare of Florence and that of all Italy.[115]

Whatever Francis' reasons for failing to provide what everyone expected of

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[112] Cf. infra, pp. 146-148, 161.

[113] The Datario was the papal bursar.

[114] Letter to Clement VII, August 21, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 163-164. Guicciardini concluded: "Ma la prudentia sua bisogna che consista in questo: di farlo in tempo che gli giovi; et non tardare tanto che, oltre alli altri disordini, si aggiunga ancora questo: di havere provisto doppo el tempo."

[115] Ibid. Note Guicciardini's lofty words: "Et la prego quanto posso che, per conservatione della Sedia Apostolica et sua, per beneficio della sua patria et per la salute di tucta Italia, non vadia più differendo el risolversi a fare grossa provisione di danari, perchè altrimente non ci è rimedio...." Florence was "sua patria."

him, Guicciardini did not precisely know. But he did point out that a good judge of the situation could only conclude that Francis preferred a long war and no early victory. Guicciardini's cynicism showed itself in his repeated comment that the "little faith and confidence among princes" probably made the King of France feel that, as soon as the Duchy of Milan would be recovered, the Italians would pay little attention to his interests. Either they would make a separate peace with the Emperor or at least they would not pursue the war and thus render the recovery of his children, then hostages in Spain, more difficult.[116]

In any case, he was still bound to the articles of the League of Cognac. Without concrete assistance in the form of money for the army and reinforcements necessary for battle, the allied undertaking was doomed![117] Guiccidardini stated that the last payment to the Swiss had been made without any French money at all and even at the time provisions from Rome and from the Venetians were falling off. He begged Roberto Acciaiuoli to take only one course of action, namely, "to cry to heaven" for help. The expenses of the Marchese di Saluzzo and "other minutiae" should be set aside if favor of those enterprises undertaken for the welfare of all Italy. Guicciardini wished to believe that this lack of aid proceeded from nothing other than negligence and that the will

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[116] Storia d'Italia, V, 60-61.

[117] Letter to Roberto Acciauoli, August 3, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 82. Cf. also letter to the same, August 22, 1526, ibid., 168. Acciauoli was the papal representative in France.

to provide it was there; but they had to impress on the King that, if he failed then, later he might have reason to repent his failure to assist the Italians to his shame and dishonor.[118] Notes of similar distress sounded in Guicciardini's appeals to the Venetians.[119]

Guicciardini pointed also to the non-cooperation of England. Guicciardini blamed the influential Cardinal of York, "willing to amuse everybody and to be entreated by all." Both he and his king were used to answering requests for assistance with brevity: "We have no concern with the affairs of Italy."[120]

Guicciardini evaluated the entire situation just prior to the allied success at Cremona in the autumn. He paid careful attention to Cremona. He believed that taking the city would give the allies much less to fear.[121] But he repeated what he claimed to have said already a hundred times daily: every part of Cremona would have to be taken to make the move a success. If any of the territory remained unconquered, the allied cause would be more than ever jeopardized.[122]

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[118] Ibid., 168-169.

[119] Cf. Geffroy, "Autobiographie," p. 669.

[120] "...anzi e il re e il cardinale rispondevano spesso: a noi non appartengono le cose di Italia," Storia d'Italia, V, 72.

[121] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 22, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 173. Note Guicciardini's words: "Se piglassimo Cremona, crederrei havessimo da temerne molto pocho."

[122] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 17, 1526, ibid., 150.

In early September Guicciardini reported that he hoped very shortly to be able to report victory in Cremona and then Genoa, where prospects for allied success appeared very favorable.[123] Because the Cremona siege was so drawn out,[124] however, he desired first-hand information, and on September 10 he sent Machiavelli, "a man of great competence,"[125] with credentials and instructions to get that information. If there were actually little prospect of an early victory, Machiavelli was to make every effort to persuade the Venetian adjutant Pesaro to end the siege and to attack Genoa immediately.[126] Machiavelli carried out his assignment by personally surveying the situation and by going over it with Pesaro and Urbino. On September 14 he returned to the camp under the walls of Milan with a report stating the confidence of the captains, and in this he concurred.[127] The city capitulated on the twenty-third, but the actual change of hands was deferred until the very end of the month.

Aside from the temporary victory of Cremona, autumn witnessed the breakdown of all the allied plans in Lombardy. The attack on Pope Clement in Rome[128]

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[123]Letter to Goffredo de Granges de Tavellis, September 6, 1526, ibid., 241.

[124]Cf. Guicciardini's words: "Non ci si vede, quanto alla speranza del vincerla, altro male che pericolo di lunghezza: che, nello stato che sono le cose, è bene male assai," letter to Giammatteo Giberti, September 7, 1526, ibid., 245.

[125]Opere inedite, IV, 361.

[126]Guicciardini's instructions to Machiavelli are published in the latter's Opere, VI, 224-226.

[127]Pasquale Villari, Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi illustrati con nuovi documenti, 4th ed. posthumous by Michele Scherillo (Milano, 1927), II, 544.

[128]Cf. infra, pp. 161-162.

allowed Machiavelli too to reconstruct all the events leading to it, including the captains' errors in the campaign and Clement's blunder of "living in Rome in such a way as to let himself be captured like a child."[129]

Guicciardini's tasks during this period were just as difficult as the situation itself. At Piacenza in October, he became involved in the matter of the papal reconciliation with the Duke of Ferrara. In August he had already explained that the confirmation of Modena and Reggio in Este possession was "of great importance though perhaps not of such great usefulness." Guicciardini used a Florentine colloquialism: since the Pope simply had to approve such action, the Duke "stara facilmente in sullo asino."[130]

The approach of the Germans and the arrival of the Spanish fleet made it clear to the Duke that affairs were taking a very favorable turn for Charles. Alfonso had been "earlier in longing expectation" of Guicciardini's coming. He now notified him in Parma, where the direction of the war seemed to be tending, that it no longer seemed fit to discuss any anti-imperialist endeavors. Alfonso left it to Guicciardini whether he would come to Ferrara or not. Had Alfonso said nothing, Clement might have been angry. But Guicciardini realized that further negotiations could end only in a compromise of the papal reputation.[131]

He informed his superior that the Duke's negotiations with Charles were

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[129]The letter containing Machiavelli's analysis and his criticism of Clement is printed in Tommasini, II, 1251.

[130]Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 22, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 176.

[131]Storia d'Italia, V, 90.

evident in many ways and he warned, should they come to conclusion, there would be "no remedy for our houses." He did not know the state of their consultations but stressed that an imperial-Ferrarese accord meant allied ruin.[132] On the other hand, it was possible there was still hope, for Machiavelli's report was that the Duke had stood "little heard" in the court of Charles.[133]

Guicciardini tended to take the more pessimistic, or realistic, view. For many years, he held that it was simply good sense to maintain friendly papal-Ferrarese relations. Not only did he refer to the neutralizing effect that this would have on the problems of one pontificate but especially he looked to the welfare of his native Florence. This was "more lasting than the life of one or two pontiffs." Then too the papal-ducal association had become intimately joined with other important interests. Until Guicciardini saw clearly the Duke's imperial tendencies, he had advised Clement to "come freely" and to negotiate an agreement that would allow the Duke to reciprocate without any difficulty.[134] He advised that an agreement earlier suggested at Reggio be concluded if it were not possible to do any better. He seemed to be grasping for something concrete, when he wrote: "We are in straits in which we must do

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[132]Letter to Jacopo Salviati, September 10, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 258. He wrote plainly: "...se Ferrara si accorda con Cesare, noi siamo ruinati...." Cf. also letter to Giammatteo Giberti, September 5, 1526, ibid., 238: "...il che se riuscissi vedrei malo exito alle cosa nostre."

[133]Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, September 11, 1526, ibid. 270-271.

[134]Letter to Bishop Altobello Averoldi, August 13, 1526, ibid., 131-132.

everything that is possible to have victory."[135] Near the end of 1526, however, he sadly reported that the Duke was giving clearer signs than ever that he favored the Emperor.[136] Obviously he was by no means finished playing clever politics.

After Guicciardini's lack of success in these papal matters in the autumn of 1526, he returned to Modena, where matters were worsening so quickly that the entire state of the Church was threatened.[137] Charles' fleet, "not certainly as great as had been rumored but of importance enough,"[138] engaged that of the allies. George Frundsberg's German pikemen, the landsknechte, of whom there had been much talk for some time, had not been stopped by the Venetians at the mountain passes and had reached the Po crossings, where the Duke of Urbino was in no position to defeat them.[139] All hopes centered on few troops and the courage of Giovanni de' Medici, wounded on November 25 as he was fighting like an ordinary soldier against the landsknechte. Two days before

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[135] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, September 5, 1526, ibid., 238. Note the frankness of his words: "...siamo in termini che bisogna fare ogni cosa per vincere...."

[136] Letter of Machiavelli to the Otto, December 3, 1526, Opere, VI, 230-231.

[137] Storia d'Italia, V, 90.

[138] Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, September 5, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 238.

[139] Guicciardini's letters included frequent references to the landsknechte. E.g., cf. letters to Bishop Altobello Averoldi, August 22, 1526, ibid., 171, to Giammatteo Giberti, August 22, 1526, ibid., 173, and to Pietro Pesaro, September 11, 1526, ibid., 267, where he shows interest in their backgrounds, their Lutheran religion and their obedience to the Emperor and the Archduke and House of Austria. In August, he described his news of their action as "Hoggi caldi, domani freddi."

his death on the last day of November, the Germans crossed the Po with their pikes aimed at the very heart of Italy.

This disaster was but a final culmination of Guicciardini's many differences with Urbino, differences which had begun at the time of retreat from the walls of Milan. Guicciardini had felt that, for the security of the state of the Church in that region, Urbino should cross the Po southward with the Venetian troops. But the Duke delayed, sometimes stating that he awaited advice from Venice, and, at other times, alleging wholly different reasons. Urbino informed the Venetian Senate that, were he to cross the Po, the imperialists would probably fall upon their dominions on which he had been ordered not to pass.[140]

Guicciardini worried that the difficulty of making progress in Lombardy would lead the Germans to pass into Tuscany. He preferred that they lay siege to Piacenza. Years later, in the Storia d'Italia he finally admitted that it was for this reason, unknown to anyone, even to the Pope himself, that he delayed sending provisions there. He would thus give hope to the enemy that it might be taken. Guicciardini was careful to find excuses for his action. He hoped that, if Piacenza should be besieged, he would find the means to relieve it.[141]

While Guicciardini invited the attack on Piacenza, he was thinking not only of all Tuscany but of Florence in particular. Nor were the Florentines

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[140] Storia d'Italia, V, 90-94.

[141] Ibid., 95-96.

less fearful of their plight. One of Machiavelli's duties as a representative of the League at its headquarters in Florence was its protection. His responsibilities led him to travel back and forth on various commissions. He had many personal meetings with Guicciardini. At the end of November 1526 Machiavelli set off, on orders from the magistracy of Florence, to Guicciardini's camp at Modena to inform him of conditions in the city. Guicciardini was told that he could negotiate as he thought best and as the times would indicate though the Florentine people preferred to "sign an agreement" rather than make concessions for their safety.[142] After immediately conferring with Guicciardini, the envoy reported to the Otto that, if the enemy came to attack the city, no help could be expected outside of six or seven thousand infantry of the Church. Guicciardini had informed Machiavelli that an agreement would have to be discussed not in the field but in Rome or in Florence.[143]

On December 31, 1526, Alfonso d'Este and Viceroy Lannoy concluded an agreement. The Duke was appointed imperial captain-general in Italy, and he was to assist Charles with troops in return for imperial protection and support for his efforts to gain Modena.[144] Though this action of Alfonso by no means

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[142] These instructions, dated November 30, 1526, are given in Machiavelli's Opere, VI, 226-228; cf. also Tommasini, II, 866 n.

[143] Letter of Machiavelli to the Otto, December 2, 1526, Opere, VI, 228; cf. also Guicciardini's Opere inedite, V, 9-10.

[144] Storia d'Italia, V, 100.

crystallized his position, he drew ever closer to the Emperor in the early months of the next year, as Guicciardini had fearfully predicted earlier.[145] Machiavelli wrote: "If the Duke of Ferrara had a bit of sense in his head and this weather lasted another two days, he could finish off this war with his eyes shut."[146] The snowy Bolognese weather continued, but Alfonso went along for the present with the conviction that the Este interest lay not with their old French ally but with the all-powerful Emperor.

The Duke's action was typical of the often selfish and involved policy webs quietly woven as the peninsula was about to enter one of the most reverberating years of its long history. For too many of the rulers, self-interest motivated by the lust for power was the only key to their shifting allegiances. Guicciardini was certain of only one thing, that the year 1526 ended with preparations on all sides for a very vigorous war.[147]

The year 1527 he characterized as "full of events unheard-of for many ages." It was replete with "changes of states, captivities of princes, shocking sackings of cities, a great scarcity of provisions, and a raging pestilence which spread through Italy, where nothing was to be seen but death, flight and rapine."[148] By that year the intensity of the Habsburg-Valois struggles on Italian soil seemingly had more than made up for the diversity and numbers of

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[145] Cf. supra, p. 68.

[146] Letter to the Otto, March 18, 1527, in Opere, VI, 248-249.

[147] Storia d'Italia, V, 100.

[148] Ibid., 101.

the various conquering groups of Spain, a subject which had once interested him.[149] He explained that Italian affairs were more disturbed, more "out-of-joint," than they had been for a thousand years![150]

Guicciardini's distress was intensified with the Constable of Bourbon's march from Milan in February of 1527. Those towns on Bourbon's route from Milan to Florence and Rome were well aware of their danger though they were merely stepping stones to these two major Italian targets. Guicciardini and Machiavelli knew something was afoot when the Spaniards left Milan, following the German pikemen who had already crossed the Trebbia. It was clear to them that the imperial troops were enroute to sack Florence and ultimately Rome.

Guicciardini had already informed his fellow-citizens of the aid that they could expect,[151] but at the beginning of February the Otto once again sent Machiavelli to Guicciardini's camp. Machiavelli was to tell him of the city's wishes and find out if further aid could be expected. Guicciardini, informed ahead of time of the envoy's arrival, gave him still another task. Machiavelli was to "tell the Duke [of Urbino] and the Marchese [of Saluzzo] what is needed."[152] On the same day as he arrived at Parma, February 7, Machiavelli

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[149] "Relazione di Spagna," Scritti autobiografici, p. 133.

[150] "...le cose di Italia in tanta agitazione e travagli che da mille anni in qua non furono mai tante," "Oratio accusatoria," ibid., p. 226.

[151] Cf. supra, p. 70.

[152] The instructions for Machiavelli's mission, dated February 3, 1527, are included in his Opere, VI, 232-233. Cf. also Guicciardini's words to the Cardinal of Cortona, who had informed him of the envoy's coming on February 5, cited in Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 325. n. 12.

and Guicciardini went to see Urbino who temporized as usual. The Duke pointed out that Saluzzo was to enter Tuscany with the vanguard of the army while he would stay in the enemy's rear with the remainder. Nevertheless, all agreed to "arrange everything pen in hand" on the day following.[153]

The discussions ended in a plan that, if the enemy would head for Tuscany by way of Pontremoli, all the Franco-Venetian forces and the armies of the Church would begin their march there immediately. If instead they turned towards Bologna, then Saluzzo alone would enter Tuscany while the Duke would bring up the rear. According to Guicciardini, Urbino was committed to this plan.[154]

On enemy movements depended the action of the League's troops. Machiavelli remained with Guicciardini to see "which way the water was going to flow, so that, if it were coming your way, I could return fully informed of the nature of the remedies...."[155] Instead of the three or four days he had intended to remain, Machiavelli stayed almost three months. He visited the papal camps facing the enemy from Parma to Bologna, where he arrived on February 27, and stayed for more than a month while the Spaniards and Germans were beaten down for lack of money and provisions, not to mention the inclement weather.

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[153]Letter of Machiavelli to the Otto, February 7, 1527, Opere, VI, 233-234.

[154]Letter to the Cardinal of Cortona, February 7 and 8, Opere inedite, VIII, 215-216.

[155]Letter to the Otto, February 11, 1527, Opere, VI, 235-236.

Several things prevented the allies from dealing a serious blow to the imperial army. The Marchese di Saluzzo and the papal army tried to take Bologna, but he could not control the troops there. Guicciardini felt that Saluzzo was "more fit to break a lance than to discharge the office of General."[156] Several months prior to Saluzzo's present assignment, Guicciardini had already recognized his inability. He simply lacked those qualities essential to an able military leader.[157] By this time, the Duke of Urbino was back in Guicciardini's good graces, for he was somewhat more successful than Saluzzo in building up allied morale.[158]

But Guicciardini found more debits than credits. He referred to the "non-cooperative disposition of the Florentine people" and the imperialist adherents in Siena.[159] The allied campaign as a whole was not proceeding with its initial vigor. Though the other members of the League continually criticized the Pope's inconstancy and the King's dilatory policy and used it as an excuse for their feeble action, Guicciardini remarked that they were "remiss enough of themselves."[160]

Pope Clement, realizing how risky it was to separate himself from his allies, nevertheless concluded an agreement in March with the Emperor's

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[156] Ibid., 117-119.

[157] "Del Marchese di Saluzzo non si intende niente," letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 24, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 184. Cf. also another letter to Giberti, September 6, 1526, ibid., 215, where he states the impossibility of excusing the Marchese's tardiness in reporting his movements.

[158] Storia d'Italia, V, 118-119.

[159] Ibid., 121-122.

[160] Ibid., 111-112.

representatives in Rome. There was to be no military activity for eight months; the Pope was to pay the Emperor sixty thousand ducats; and the Colonnas, imperial adherents, were to restore all lands taken from the Church.[161]

On March 31, however, Bourbon informed Guicciardini that he had to continue his southward march, for his troops would not obey any command to the contrary. He explained that they could probably be stopped upon the payment of more money. Pope Clement accepted this offer and ordered Florence to provide the required amount.[162] Guicciardini's words intimate his disapproval of this heavy obligation on Florence.

Machiavelli too had a good idea of the situation when he wrote from Imola in early April. The Otto, he counselled, should not be blackmailed by Bourbon. He asked figuratively what agreement could be hoped for with an enemy "who, when the Alps are still between you and your forces are still in the field, asks for a hundred thousand florins within three days and a hundred and fifty thousand within ten days?" When they get to Florence, he continued, the first things they will demand will be everything you own, for without any doubt (and would it were not so!) their advance is prompted only by the prospect of booty, and there is no other remedy against this evil than to set them right. And, if you have to do this, it is better to do it at the Alps than at your very walls.[163]

At this point, in the spring of 1527, both Machiavelli and Guicciardini

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[161] Ibid., 122.

[162] Ibid., 123-125, 130.

[163] Letter to the Otto, April 2, 1527, Opere, VI, 256-257.

were seriously concerned about the fate of their beloved Florence. Machiavelli explained to Vettori that it was essential to beat the enemy into Tuscany and leave the dilatory Duke of Urbino to draw up the rear as he pleased.[164] Urbino had only a few papal troops under his command at Forlì, and the others had been stationed here and there along the way as protection for cities on the road from Parma.[165] The two Florentines agreed at this time that "help should be given the Romagna while its territories can be defended at sixteen soldi to the lira," but then "with those Italian troops that can be collected and with what money is left come...and save Florence at all costs.[166] Machiavelli's words manifest real tension, for he saw what could happen. "Things are in such a state that we must either reconstruct the war or conclude peace." These words were the words of Machiavelli to the Otto on April 11.[167]

Guicciardini understood that Pope Clement's hopes for Bourbon's obedience to the Viceroy were vain. He earnestly implored the Marchese di Saluzzo and the Venetians to realize that there would be no peace and, for their own interest if not that of others, not to abandon the Pope and Tuscany. Clement had been deceived, for he sincerely expected the agreement to end in a truce. By giving him assistance, Guicciardini was careful to point out, the Venetians would simply be carrying out the conditions of the alliance. This would

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[164]Letter to Francesco Vettori, April 5, 1527, Lettere familiari, pp. 521-522.

[165]Letter to the Otto, April 11, 1527, Opere, VI, 261-262.

[166]Letter to Vettori, April 5, 1527, Lettere familiari, pp. 521-522.

[167]Letter to the Otto, April 11, 1527, Opere, VI, 261-262.

redound to their credit. And, if they gave him help, the Pope would be able to make a truce favorable for himself and Florence, and this, in the long run, would prove very beneficial to the League. If abandoned, however, the Pope would be forced to grant the imperialists a large sum of money and make considerable monthly payments. All this money would be used later in a war against them! He begged them, as a protection to themselves, to dispatch their forces to defend Tuscany when Bourbon moved to attack it.[168]

Saluzzo and the Venetians felt that they had been asked to place their interests in a position secondary to those in the League. Perhaps it was true that to abandon the Pope would hurt the common effort. On the other hand, to grant military aid would mean to expose their troops to danger between the Apennines and the enemy, an area already so disaffected to them.

Intrigue played its role. Guicciardini observed that many suspected that the Duke of Urbino had made a secret agreement with Bourbon not to block his passage into Tuscany. Though he was in extreme need of supplies, Bourbon was able to cross the Apennines. At the same time Bourbon wrote, though insincerely, to Lieutenant Guicciardini of his desire to show his devotion to the Pope.

The imperial Viceroy, Lannoy, was just as clever as Bourbon. For many reasons, he was satisfied with the papal-imperial truce in the spring of 1527, "as for many other reasons, so also, as I [Guicciardini] have heard from trustworthy persons, because of his plan that the army should move their full force against the Venetians." Yet he did not carry out the promise he had made at Rome to remove the cavalry and the greater part of the Spanish infantry from

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[168] Storia d'Italia, V, 125-126.

Bourbon's control. In fact, while he was negotiating at Florence, he refused to do so on the grounds that he would not cause the ruin of Charles' army.[169]

Both Machiavelli and Guicciardini recognized that the agreement between Pope Clement and Lannoy was "uncertain and false,...made in Rome and not observed in Lombardy." Machiavelli explained that an insincere agreement would be a loss to the allies and a boon to the enemy: "They are thinking only of war as they advance upon you, and they are letting you become confused between war and truces."[170] While the Viceroy attempted to get Bourbon to agree to halt his march, Guicciardini wrote that

> Never was there a more complicated and dangerous affair than this.... In these difficulties, I feel that the most perilous aspect of all is the fact that we have the enemy in Tuscany and are without armed forces, and so I have taken the decision on my own initiative, as I have no assistance from Rome, to send towards Florence all the forces at my disposal....[171]

Machiavelli was elated by Guicciardini's decision, for it afforded at least some hope for Florence. He stated with a burst of emotion:

> I love Messer Francesco Guicciardini. I love my country more than my own soul and I tell you by the experience I have gained in sixty years that I do not believe there was ever a more difficult situation than this, where peace is necessary and war cannot be avoided, and we have on our hands a prince who is hard put to it to do what is needed either for peace or for war alone.[172]

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[169] Ibid., 126-128.

[170] Letter to Vettori, April 14, 1527, Lettere familiari, pp. 523-524.

[171] Letter to the Otto, April 16, 1527, Opere inedite, V, 409-410.

[172] Letter to Vettori, April 16, 1527, Lettere familiari, pp. 524-525.

The allied army passed into Tuscany. Its commanders knew of Bourbon's advance. The major officers in council with papal and Florentine agents agreed that the united armies should encamp at some post beyond Florence to deprive Bourbon of all means of access to it. They agreed to Federigo da Bozzolo's recommendation to remove the troops to Ancisa, thirteen miles from Florence.[173] Internal commotion in Florence formed a hindrance to this project.

Machiavelli arrived in Florence on April 22 and Guicciardini on the following day. The city was in a bad mood. Guicciardini made the statement that: "If the populace does defend itself the government will not be able to."[174] His prophecy was right, as the Medici regents were driven out and a Florentine republic proclaimed.

But the Roman hell of May 6, 1527, was the disaster. Guicciardini wrote "It would be impossible...to relate and almost to conceive the calamities of that city...."[175] In all fairness it must be said that Guicciardini for once did not give himself the credit due him. When he learned of the sack of Rome, he sent Machiavelli to Civitavecchia. The rumor was that the Pope had taken refuge there. In any case Andrea Doria was there with his ships, and Machiavelli was to discuss future allied plans with him.[176]

What came as a worse shock to both Guicciardini and Machiavelli was the

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[173] Storia d'Italia, V, 129-131.

[174] Letter of April 24, 1527, Opere inedite, V, 417.

[175] Storia d'Italia, V, 138-141.

[176] Letter to Guicciardini, Opere, VI, 265-266.

"dreadful news from Rome,"[177] that Clement, without hope, had made a treaty with the imperialist troops on June 6.[178] To Guicciardini this meant only that the horrors of the month of May could have been avoided! All past efforts now seemed so useless!

These views of Guicciardini further crystallized with the Barcelona accord between Pope and Emperor on June 27, 1529, where Charles again demonstrated the upper-hand. Of this agreement Guicciardini wrote:

> This peace and confederacy put an end to those long and burdensome wars, which had continued over eight years, with so many shocking events, and all Italy remained free from the tumultuous noise and perils of arms, except the city of Florence, whose war had been conducive to the peace of the rest while the peace of the rest aggravated its war.[179]

Florentine affairs, caught up in the maelstrom of power politics, could not have taken any other course. With Pope Clement and King Francis reconciled to Charles V, the many small states of the peninsula had no choice but to make the best terms possible with the Emperor and to accept him as the arbiter of Italian destinies. Perhaps the motives of the Venetian Republic for a treaty with the Emperor did have a selfish note, but its very preservation was at stake. And with the fall of Venice under imperial control, the isolation of Florence was complete.

Guicciardini's own sentiments in the matter of papal-Florentine relations

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[177]This phrase, from a letter of Machiavelli, referred to his and Guicciardini's reaction when they had learned of the May 6th sack, Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 247.

[178]Storia d'Italia, V, 147.

[179]These provisions are given in more detail in ibid., 264.

are clear. It was frightful for Guicciardini to contemplate the destruction of the city.[180] Hence Florentine submission to the papacy, now cooperating with the Emperor, was the course of wisdom. This view Guicciardini held as a loyal son of Florence and not because of any particular loyalty to the Medici.

Native-born historians of Florence of all periods have held the viewpoint that, had it not been for Malatesta Baglioni's treason,[181] their city would have survived the crisis of the siege.[182] While recounting the facts, Guicciardini as usual took the more profound viewpoint. No single accident of the papal-imperialist siege could have accounted for the fall of Florence. The tenor of all his pages relating to the Republic's struggle is that, in her isolation, she could not sustain herself in the long run against the overpowering strength of the two allied world potentates, the Pope and the Emperor.

Guicciardini was pessimistic as he looked at the political scene, both as an historian and as a political figure involved in medibus rebus. His dejection centered on many things. He saw the greed, the selfishness, the individualism and the treachery which reigned supreme in Cinquecento Italy. He knew the military ineptitude of Italy. He realized that, without these blemishes, the barbarians, for all their power and resources, could not have gained so strong

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[180] Ibid., 280.

[181] His treason consisted in the fact that he had taken it upon himself to begin negotiations for the eventual capitulation of Florence to the imperialists.

[182] Schevill, Florence, p. 495.

a foothold in the peninsula. He observed daily the apathy, the neglect of responsibility and the lack of effective leadership[183] which doomed the cause of the allies of Cognac. When neutrality was no longer possible, when Italy understood that her safety did not lie in the struggles between two foreign powers, steadfast adherence to the anti-imperialist league would have at least helped peninsular affairs. This Guicciardini believed. He seemed to have hoped against hope. But instead he lived to see each political unit lose its independence, including his patria. Nothing gave him reason to hope from 1527 to 1530. He could only despair.

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[183] Here Guicciardini's criticism centered largely on his papal master as leader of the League of Cognac. Cf. infra, pp. 148-150.

CHAPTER III

THE PAPAL INCUMBENTS (1492-1523) AND THE BASES OF THEIR POLITICS

Papal activities are woven into the fabric of sixteenth-century Italian history. Many of Guicciardini's observations on the Holy See and its incumbents fit equally well under the topics of power struggle, papal politics or religion. This chapter will consider the underlying themes of papal politics in the Renaissance with stress on the period from Alexander VI through the death of Adrian VI. With it one can see more clearly into the politics of Guicciardini.

Guicciardini noted that the prime position of the pope and the reverence due the Christian religion were partial explanations for the development of the political power of the early Church and its acquisition of lands and money. He suggested that the popes, through fear but mostly through ambition, followed the examples of secular princes. Before the end of the Constantinian period, the popes found it easy to establish control of their "regno celeste" by winning support through charitable works and by the organization of dioceses. The transfer of the imperial center to the East crystallized the development of papal rule in the West.

Guicciardini passed quickly over the medieval period and concentrated on

his own time. Though men lost reverence for the popes, their authority was maintained. The popes enhanced their prestige because they controlled various ecclesiastical appointments. In fact, they were often stimulated to ennoble their relatives and grant them rich benefices. Yet Guicciardini seriously opposed a secular ruler's warring against the pope, who was so highly esteemed, for this would bring him grave infamy and small gain.[1]

In this treatment of papal power, Guicciardini expanded on the growing problems in the laicization of society during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One of the fundamental issues considered was the Franco-Spanish struggle for southern Italy which proved to be a cross for the papacy. Both the French and the Aragonese violated papal authority in their attempts to gain the Neapolitan crown. The situation was, moreover, complicated by repeated attempts of the Aragonese to make alliances with the Sforza and Malatesta in the north, which would result in the encirclement of the papal states. As early as 1420, the popes were forced to defend their holdings against the encroachments of the Aragonese, the French, the Florentines, the Venetians and the condottieri.[2] With the ending of the Great Schism and the return of Martin V to Rome, Rome was in the possession of Francesco Sforza. By the aid of Joanna of Naples and a subsequent alliance with the Sforza rulers, the papal states

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[1]Cf. Storia d'Italia, I, Chap. 12, 370-381.

[2]Odorico Rinaldi, Annales Ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII, ed. Joanne Domenico Mansi, IX (Lucae, 1752), 71, no. 5, and 58-59, no. 19.

saw the removal of foreign troops and the return to papal control.[3] Hence from the beginning, the fifteenth-century papacy had to fight to keep the papal states free.

Rome was torn by the continual quarrels of the Orsini and the Colonna and the failure of the papacy to insure a stable grain supply for its territories. Under Alfonso V, the Aragonese took Terracina and Benevento, which guarded the grain routes from the southern kingdom to Rome, and used this position to cause trouble for a papacy reluctant to support their claims to Naples.[4]

Eugenius IV tried to settle the Neapolitan question by recognizing Alfonso as the heir of Joanna II in 1442, but his plan was upset by Alfonso's death in 1455 and the conflicting claims of Alfonso's illegitimate son Ferrante and another relative, John of Calabria.[5] Yet the papal support given these Aragonese claimants was in fact recognition of a fait accompli. Like his predecessor, Eugenius tried to reassert his authority in the papal states, but he never got anywhere. The condottieri, seeking to restore a Roman republic and to carve out individual holdings for themselves, plagued the papacy.[6] Eugenius replied to such threats by creating a warrior element in the

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[3] Ibid., VIII, 488, no. 10.

[4] Emmanuel P. Rodocanachi, Histoire de Rome de 1354 à 1471 (Paris, 1922), pp. 447-448.

[5] John of Calabria was a direct descendant of Louis I of Anjou (d. 1385).

[6] Alberti, Commentarius de Conjuratione Porcaria, in Lodovicus A. Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, XXV (Mediolani, 1751), 314.

cardinalate.[7] By doing so, he continued in the tradition of the great fourteenth-century Cardinal Albornoz and foreshadowed Pope Julius II. Eugenius was even forced to seek refuge in Florence, whose inhospitality forced him to move to Siena.

The fifteenth-century popes were forced of necessity to solidify their political control of the papal states lest they loose them entirely. Martin V and his successors were forced to become more and more strict in maintaining peace in Rome. The provincial areas were nominally under the authority of a papal appointee, but they were actually in the power of a local condottiere. Brigandage and civil disobedience were commonplace. Pius II attempted to restore some order by offering amnesty to all except those guilty of homicide, heresy and arson and by establishing a guard for the preservation of civil peace.[8] Sometimes the popes tried to regain political control by granting concessions to the Romans, but, as Guicciardini's own career as a governor in the papal territories later demonstrated, after 1470 they took very stern measures.[9]

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[7]Such were the appointments of Cardinals Vitelleschi, Scarampo and Piccinino under Eugenius IV.

[8]Auguste Theiner, ed., Codex Diplomaticus Domini Temporalis S. Sedis, III (Roma, 1862), 415, no. 361.

[9]Guicciardini's rule of Reggio and Modena taxed his ingenuity as he rigorously exercised his papal charge. Strict punishment of the authors of the excesses was necessary to curb disorder. Note his words: "Le cose...non potrebbero essere in peggiore disordine, che è come uno baccano....," letter to Cardinal de'Medici, July 17, 1517, Carteggi, II, 173. Disorderly conditions continued to prevail in Reggio although he had used almost every conceivable

In spite of the turbulence of the states of the Church, the despots and republics within them did not want to repudiate papal suzerainty completely. They sought a compromise with the papacy which would guarantee as far as possible their stability and freedom of action. Thus papal claims remained intact and simply needed reassertion.

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type of repression, including the confiscation of crops and goods, the razing of houses and capital punishment, Geffroy, "Autobiographie," p. 666. He had to deal with quarrelsome and rapacious feudal lords, who enlisted the aid of neighboring lords and even notorious Apennine brigands like Domenico da Morotto, ibid., p. 665. Ariosto encountered similar problems in the Este-controlled Garfagnana. Morotto was one of the thorns in his side too, and he received advice from Duke Alfonso on the method of procedure he should take, letter to Lodovico Ariosto, April 6, 1522, in Giovanni Sforza, ed., Documenti inediti per servire alla vita di Lodovico Ariosto (Modena, 1926), p. 121. Cf. ibid., pp. 111-116, 119, 124-127, for other letters of Alfonso to Ariosto in 1522 which show that the Duke was interested in Ariosto's work and gave him power to proceed with complete independence in difficult cases. Like Guicciardini, Ariosto really undertook all cares of the government, hearing all accusations and struggles over thefts and homicides. He begged some to cooperate with him and threatened others, and daily wrote to the Duke for counsel and aid. His armed men were too few to affront the bandits and assassins who infested the territory, and he was reduced to the alternative of using the extreme measures of burning the goods of the bandits, their adherents and aids and even the churches which, because of ecclesiastical immunity, served as a secure retreat for offenders, Lodovico Ariosto, Lettere, 3rd ed. by Antonio Cappelli, (Milano, 1887), pp. lxxxix, 200, 163, and, for references to the ducal counsel in the summer and fall of 1523, p. xci, n. 1. His task was so difficult that Ariosto often spoke excitedly, e.g., ibid., pp. 213-216. He even threatened to abandon the office, for "Ognuno è di malavoglia, e dicono mal di me, ma più di V.S. [the Duke,] che pigli li loro denari e lasci abbandonate la rocche....," ibid., p. 234. But, like Guicciardini, Ariosto took his duties seriously: "...fin che starò in questo ufficio non sono per avervi amico alcuno, se non la giustizia," cited in ibid., p. xcii. Of his role as governor for the Duke, Ariosto wrote in the third person that "he acted so wisely that he brought peace to the country; when he left them, he was content, although while he remained there he was disturbed," Le Satire, ed. Antonio del Piero (Milano, 1943), p. 46. Not only the papal holdings but many other Italian regions were beset with problems which were intensified by foreign invasion.

The papal states never fully provided financial security to the fifteenth and sixteenth-century papacy. A concession was made in tax exemptions, a practice which grew and grew under each pontiff.[10] Under such conditions, they had to get funds by means of annates and indulgence money.

The political and economic activities of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century popes should be viewed not so much as a concentration on papal leadership in a pan-Italian movement,[11] but simply as an immediate struggle for the maintenance of political independence. The papacy was forced into the position where it could make its authority felt only to the degree to which it could claim respect as a political power.

Violations of papal authority by foreign dynasties and by local condottieri were evident proof of the growing secularization of European society. Conciliarism and Gallicanism too threatened the fifteenth-century papacy in its freedom. By virtue of their own princely character, national monarchs kept mixed matters within their own jurisdiction or looked upon the pope as a *primus inter pares*. Martin V and his successors had adhered to simple traditional principle of the separation of church and the secular order in a Christian

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[10]The extreme debt of the Roman government in 1471 was traceable to heavy expenses during the Crusades and to the dwindling tax resources of the papal states. Cf. "Diarium Antonii Petri" in Muratori, XXIV, 977-985.

[11]This interpretation was read into the conflict of the papacy with the French and the Aragonese by Cecilia M. Ady, *Pius II* (London, 1913), p. 184, but it has also been expounded by an entire school of modern Italian scholars, notably Ernesto Pontieri, *L'equilibrio e la crisi politica italiana nella seconda metà del secolo XV* (Napoli, 1946), p. 73.

society,[12] but the reputation of the papacy still stood sufficiently high at the time for them to exert pressure in purely temporal matters. Guicciardini noted, for example, that Innocent VIII had supported some Neapolitan barons who were revolting against King Ferrante. Lorenzo de' Medici feared such a policy. Given papal ambition, the Church's power shown here might prove harmful to other rulers.[13]

Although the papal dignity was still important, the papacy could no longer seriously hope to demonstrate its leadership of Christendom through a common European crusade. Yet both Nicholas V and Calixtus III thought they could obtain support for a crusade if there would first be political peace in Italy. The Peace of Lodi of 1454 evidenced a general Italian desire for peace. Theoretically at least, this peace continued as the basis for all papal action.[14]

The death of Lorenzo de' Medici, who tried to keep the balance of power in Italy, and the accession of Alexander VI occurred coincidentally in the same year. The Borgia Pope and his successors, especially Julius II, forcefully reasserted their spiritual prerogatives and their claims to Church territories. Leo X witnessed the accession of Charles V, who maintained that he stood for peace among Christians and the defense of Christianity against

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[12]Cf. the papal letter to Charles VIII in Victor Martin, Les origines du Gallicanisme (Paris, 1937), II, 241.

[13]"Elogio," p. 225.

[14]Cf. Theiner, III, 379, No. 324, and supra, p. 26, n.1. Clement explained frequently that the maintenance of peace was his papal charge, but Guicciardini found it necessary to challenge his words.

Moslems and heretics. The Emperor hoped that the Pope would be his ally. As spiritual heads of the Christian Church, however, the popes could never acknowledge the emperor as the ultimate arbiter of the religious problems afflicting Christendom. It was intolerable that a secular prince should take the initiative in reforming the Church and should threaten to summon a general council.

Europe conceived of Charles V's empire primarily in terms of pure power. This gave birth to the permanent hostility of France, the only other European power of comparable strength, and then the dependent position of the lesser powers, England, the Italian states and Denmark. Guicciardini agreed with Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples in 1526, that it was the nature of the Popes to fear and hate the Emperors.[15] At the high point of the struggles which Guicciardini delineates, Clement VII was as alarmed as the medieval popes over the control of Milan and Naples by one ruler. One of Charles' major weaknesses was his inability to get the papacy to cooperate wholeheartedly in his policies.

Guicciardini is at his best in detailing the play-by-play movements of Charles V and Clement VII. Alone among contemporaries perhaps, he saw clearly the medieval character of the imperial politics of the emperor.[16] He realized that a pope could only preserve his role as Vicar of Christ if he could maintain

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[15] Storia d'Italia, IV, 342.

[16] Raffaello Ramat, Il Guicciardini e la tragedia d'Italia (Firenze, 1953), p. 26.

his regnum.[17] There was an intimate link between the regnum and the sacerdotium.

He did not deny that the pope was a spiritual leader and that his attention to spiritual affairs gave him greater esteem in the eyes of the Christians. Yet, as always, he accented the fact that man and his world are certainly not too good. Who doubts that if a pope did not tend to his charge "with every kind of arms and power he would be annihilated not less in the spiritual aspects of his rule than in the temporal?" With careful and shrewd logic, he argued for the preservation of the temporal authority of the papacy without which the pope could not exercise his spiritual authority.[18] Further Guicciardini knew from experience that disorder in the papal states would inevitably open the way for lay princes to seize control of the church.[19]

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[17]The word "regnum" as used in this sentence refers to the temporal aspects of papal rule and not as usual to the temporal power. Cf. infra, p.129, n.1.

[18]"Giustificazione della politica di Clemente VII," Scritti politici, p. 207. Cf. also the same argument in "Contro l'accordo tra Clemente VII e Carlo V," ibid., p. 185: "Non potete conservare la autorità del papa, se non conservate quella del principe: e quella del principe resta annichilata, come ha a ricognoscere l'essere suo dalla discrezione di uno maggiore, come ha a dependere de' cenni suoi." Because of these views, Guicciardini has been hailed as a precursor of later proponents of the Lateran Pact, Francesco Sarri, "Guicciardini e la religione," Francesco Guicciardini nel IV centenario della morte (1540-1940) (Firenze, 1940), p. 184. Pastor calls attention to Guicciardini's view that, though in itself it would be a good thing if the pope had no temporal sovereignty, the world being what it is, a powerless Head of the Church would very likely find himself seriously hampered in the exercise of his spiritual office or even reduced to absolute impotence, VI, 451-452, citing Opere inedite, I, 389. Pastor shows that Guicciardini's view approaches that of Robert Bellarmine: "Propter malitiam temporum experientia clamat, non solum utiliter, sed etiam experientia clamat, non solum utiliter, sed etiam necessario ex singulari Dei providentia donatos fuisse pontifici...temporales aliquos principatus," citing De Rom. Pontif., Lib. V, c.9, in ibid.,452, n.*

[19]"Giustificazione della politica," pp. 206-207.

Guicciardini stressed that a pope has the serious obligation to hand on to his successors what he has received from his predecessors. He shunned violence in papal activities lest it result in immediate papal defeat. Prerequisites for a just papal policy are a good christian life and refusal to fight to extend lands or in revenge against papal opponents. Guicciardini recognized that good example and gentle action are not enough for an effective papal policy.[20]

These criteria made Guicciardini a good judge of the popes from Alexander VI to Clement VII. No pope should dare to take any step which would place him at the mercy of the temporal power. Then too, the papal station was too often attended with restless ambitions.[21] More than any other persons, the popes were obliged to procure the preservation of the peace,[22] but Guicciardini accused them of standing most of the time as "lo instrumento di suscitare guerre e incendi nuovi in Italia."[23] He accused Leo X of having used all his power to start a war in 1521. For difficult cases, the popes should be willing to give their own lives.[24]

He could look impartially at Alexander VI for his own papal service did not begin until the reign of Leo X.[25] He recapitulated Alexander's role in the

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[20] Ibid., p. 207.

[21] Storia d'Italia, II, 168. Note Guicciardini's words: "...sedia comunemente della ambizioni e delle azioni inquieti."

[22] Ibid., IV, 77.

[23] Ibid., I, 381.

[24] Ibid., IV, 77-78.

[25] As one of the major directors of the foreign policy of the Holy See during the reign of Clement VII, he felt called upon to justify it after 1526 and 1527. Cf. infra, pp. 144-151.

struggle between Ferdinand of Aragon and Lodovico Sforza of Milan for the mastery of Naples. Both vied for the support of the papacy. Guicciardini pointed out that, to Il Moro's satisfaction, Alexander had been one of the first to approve of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy but he came to fear for his own life and took refuge in the Castel Sant' Angelo as the French passed through the papal dominions. He was cognizant too that enemy cardinals might take advantage of French interest in ecclesiastical reform. Perhaps the King would heed their requests and procure the election of another pope to replace him.[26] In 1495 Alexander formed the League of Venice, aimed primarily at the expulsion of the French King from Naples. By 1498 the Pope pressed the ambassadors of Spain, Milan and Naples to plead with the Venetian ambassador for the restoration of Pisa to Florence as a condition for Florence's allegiance to the anti-French league. With the removal of this problem among the Italians, it seemed probable at the time that no one power would ever call in the French again.

Guicciardini judged that Alexander was exclusively inspired by self-interest. This accounted for his wavering policy. It was "well-known" that he had privately negotiated with Charles VIII for Cesare's benefit,[27] and later formed the league against him. Then the Pope considered a league with Louis XII when he had been unsuccessful in gaining Naples.[28] His "immoderate thirst for power" made him feel that he could achieve his ends more effectively in a

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[26] Storia d'Italia, I, 99-101.

[27] Ibid., 294.

[28] Ibid., 304-308. The Pope first thought that he would gain control of Naples by marrying his son Cesare to King Federigo's daughter.

disturbed Italy.[29]

In 1497, he took advantage of the opportunity to seize the Orsini estates. While the heads of the Orsini were prisoners in Naples, Alexander declared them rebels for having entered the French service without his permission. Cardinal Ascanio Sforza encouraged this action, for he was friendly to the Colonnas, enemies of the Orsini. The Pope agreed that the Cardinal could keep some of the Orsini lands for himself. Lodovico too approved of the Pope's action but the Venetians did not.[30]

Guicciardini stressed Pope Alexander VI's misconduct. He showed excessive interest in Cesare's advancement. He scandalously promoted twelve men to the cardinalate who offered him much money! To seize every opportunity to serve his avarice, Alexander published the Jubilee in Italy and in foreign countries. The profit from the indulgences and other spiritual emoluments and from the temporal dominions of the Church he gave to Cesare, who was then preparing for his siege of Faenza.[31]

Cesare, the Duke of Valentino, fell from the height of his greatness in 1503 after the Pope's reconcilation with the French king. He had quickly increased his strength by fraud and cruelty and by the arms and power of the Church, but his ruin was headlong. His enemies used him the same way as he and his father, Alexander, had used others.[32]

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[29] Ibid., 299-302.

[30] Ibid., 271.

[31] Ibid., II, 10.

[32] Ibid., 70-71.

The Pope's major enemies were the Orsini, Colonna, Savelli, and the lords of the Romagna, the Marca and Urbino.[33] The Florentines and the Venetians feared him but he won the esteem of the French king. He was the head of an excellent body of troops in the Roman region and he held the balance in the war between France and Spain.[34]

Guicciardini termed Alexander "uomo valentissimo," a man of great judgment and vision as the success of his house shows, but he did not admire the Pope's methods. At the death of Alexander, all Rome hurried to St. Peter's. As pope, he viewed sacred and secular things without distinction, dispensed ecclesiastical offices profusely, was immoderately ambitious and avaricious, treacherous and monstrously cruel. His cupidity led him to assassinate those cardinals and prelates who stood in his way. From the time of his simoniacal election as pope, he cultivated all vices of body and soul. There was in him no religion, no observance of faith, no concern forjustice in a Rome which was nothing but sin. He observed only what seemed useful to him.[35]

A sense of tragedy is evident in Guicciardini's portrait of Alexander. The Pope's undertakings were attended with a very rare prosperity from his

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[33]Alexander Borgia aimed to break the power of the great Roman families. Guicciardini points out that the Cardinals del Vincola, Ascanio, those of the Colonna and Savelli families, and many other enemy cardinals pressed Charles VIII to remove him from the papal chair and to procure another election in defense of God's Church, ibid., I, 101.

[34]Storie fiorentine, pp. 258-269.

[35]Ibid., Cf. Machiavelli's characterization of Alexander's ambition: "Wicked Pope, his head full of his own designs, preyed on Milan and Florence: the times serve him well," Le Opere, ed. P. Fanfani and L. Passerini, from Vol. II onwards, ed. L. Passerini and G. Milanesi, 6 vols. incomplete (Firenze, 1873-77), II, 138.

youth to the day of his death. He always desired great things and obtained even more than he desired. From this Guicciardini suggested that things were influenced by fate or by inexplicable divine justice. Guicciardini came to think that justice does not flourish among men on earth.[36]

The historian's interest in Julius II was more political. He believed that a pope was bound not to alienate ecclesiastical possessions. Though he did not think a pope should be a military man, he suggested that strong action at times was necessary.[37]

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[36]Similar judgments, with only differing phraseology, are given in ibid. and in Storia d'Italia, II, 97-98. Note the puzzled explanation of Guicciardini, unable to fathom Alexander's good fortune: "...e nondimeno, non trovando e' peccati sua condegna retribuzione nel mondo, fu insino allo ultimo di felicissimo....e volto l'animo a fare stato, furono e' successi sua più volte maggiori ch'e' disegni....fu insomma più cattivo e più felice che mai per molti secoli fussi forse stato papa alcuno." Cf. also the following: "Esempio potente a confondere l'arroganza di coloro i quali, presumendosi di scorgere con la debolezza degli occhi umani la profondità de' giudici divini, affermano ciò che di prospero o di avverso avviene agli uomini procedere o da' meriti o da' demeriti loro: come se tutto di non apparissero molti buoni essere vessati ingiustamente e molti di pravo animo essere esaltati indebitamente; o come se, altrimenti interpretando, si derogasse alla giustizia e alla potenza di Dio; la amplitudine della quale, non ristretta a' termini bravi e presenti, in altro tempo e in altro luogo, con larga mano, con premi e con supplici sempiterni, riconosce e giusti dagli ingiusti."

[37]Cf. supra, pp. 90-92.

Pope Julius' character is evident in his leadership of papal troops at Mirandola, where he exposed himself to all the fatigues and dangers of a military commander. It was an uncommon and shocking sight to see an old and infirm pope engaged in battle. This was evidence that Julius was a pope in name only.[38]

His energy, like his audacity and resolution, was boundless, and his experience toughened him even more. Guicciardini compared him to the classical Anteus, who demonstrated more vigor with each blow of Hercules.[39] Guicciardini did not attempt to hide his admiration for Julius who, more than any of his predecessors, was honored by those who judged that a pope should add imperium to the Holy See more than influence souls by a good example. But for the latter task, Christ constituted popes his vicars on earth. Julius would have been worthy of the greatest glory if he were a secular prince or if his care and intention were rather to exalt the Church by the use of the spiritual arts of peace. Had he been moderate and prudent in the exercise of his papal duties, he would have sustained the Church's reputation, lessened princely discord, and bettered the general condition of the times.[40] Either the fates or the Pope's strong constitution kept him alive to serve "come autore e cagione principale

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[38]Storia d'Italia, III, 64-65. In this passage Guicciardini also noted the striking contrast between Julius and Louis XII, healthy and vigorous and trained from youth in military exercises. Unlike the Pope, he left the conduct of the war to his generals.

[39]Ibid., 39.

[40]Ibid., 257.

di piu lunghe e maggiori calamità di Italia."[41]

With his accession to the pontificate, Julius relented from fomenting disturbances in Italy so that he could accumulate money for his projects. He was determined to restore the lands of the Church which had been taken from it, and he vowed to use any method to gain his ends.[42] Both France and the Empire succumbed to Julius' desire to regain these territories. He wanted to maintain temporal strnegth and decided now to assist the Venetians, against whom he had entered the confederacy of Cambrai in 1508, against the foreign states struggling for Italian control. Guicciardini pointed out that Julius was jealous of France and the Empire and wanted to involve them in difficulties which would divert their attention from him. The members of the Cambrai league reminded the Pope that he was bound by its terms to prosecute the Venetians with spiritual and temporal weapons until the allies recovered their possessions. Julius assured the Emperor in particular that he would not forget that the Venetians had seized some imperial lands.[43]

From 1510 he was set to expel the foreigner from Italy. His cry was "Fuori i barbari!" He harbored strong anti-French distaste and, as a result, an anti-Ferrarese and anti-Florentine feeling as well.[44] In that year he began to

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[41] Ibid., 120.

[42] Ibid., II, 168, 174-175. Note Guicciardini's phrase: "Ma in Giulio era intenzione molto diversa."

[43] Ibid., 283-284.

[44] Guicciardini observed that everyday Julius grew more insolent against the King of France and the Duke of Ferrara, "...moltiplicando scopertamente nelle querele e nelle minaccie," ibid., III, 25.

speak openly of his intention to change the government of Florence because it was too French.[45] Nor was the Aragonese ruler unmindful of what he considered immoderate ambitions on the part of the Pope. On August 19, 1512, a period in Guicciardini's legateship in which he already showed himself to be in excellent standing with Ferdinand, the King called Guicciardini to him to discuss this situation. Julius' desire to change the government of Florence "sanza ragione" indicated that he wished to dominate all Italy, and it was Ferdinand's intention to defend the city and her present government in every way.[46]

The religio-political connections between the policy of the French ruler and Julius II merit further consideration, likewise events regarding control of Ferrara, Reggio and Modena. His immediate successors too displayed the same intensive interests in these regions.

The Pope attempted to break the Franco-Ferrarese alliance and to gain possession of Alfonso's duchy. The French King thought that Julius had sent papal troops into Ferrara to oversee the customs and salt works. The King agreed that, in the case of Alfonso's interference with papal customs and the salt works, Julius could proceed against him, since no ally was to intrude into Church affairs. The Pope did not wish to disclose his intentions until his plans matured, and he negotiated continually for an agreement with Louis XII.

But Julius was adamant in his position that the King must renounce his protection of the Duke. Guicciardini observed that Julius knew what he was

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[45]Letter of Antonio della Valle to Machiavelli, August 30, 1510, Opere, VI, 97.

[46]Letter of Guicciardini to the Dieci, August 22-26, 1512, Carteggi, I, 85.

doing, for the King did not want to war against the Church and would be willing to come to an agreement with the Pope in the event of a showdown as to the French position in the struggle between Julius and Alfonso.[47]

In spite of the miscarriage of many of Julius' plans and the heavy expenditures, he had high hopes for future success. Publicly he proclaimed that, with God's assistance for the restoration of Italian liberty, he would see his labors brought to a prosperous end. The Venetians would aid him, for they were his only true friends. They had to act with Julius, Guicciardini explained, for they had exhausted their finances and were in dire stratis. With them he moved against Ferrara from Bologna.[48] The King soon realized that the Pope was acting to subject Ferrara to the Church. He had arranged for more papal troops to move into Ferrara with the intention, if his Swiss mercenaries were victorious there, of proceeding into Milan. After investing the Emperor with Naples and making secret provisions for attacking Genoa by land and sea, he sent twelve thousand Swiss into Milan and moved to assist the Venetians to recover some towns held by the Emperor.[49]

Julius excommunicated Alfonso d'Este and all who had or would take arms in

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[47] Ibid., 22-24.

[48] Ibid., 39-41. Note Guicciardini's words:...deliberò di trasferirsi personalmente a Bologna, per strignere più con la sua presenza e date maggiore autorità alle cose, e accrescere la caldezza de' capitani inferiore allo impeto suo; affermando che a espugnare Ferrara gli bastavano le forze sue e de' viniziani...," ibid., 41.

[49] Ibid., 24-26.

his defense, including all the principal officers in the French army.[50] Even after Gallican articles were drawn up against him at Orleans and Tours with a threat to summon him to a Church council, the Pope answered that he would come to terms only if the King obligated himself totally to abandon the defense of Ferrara![51]

Guicciardini strongly condemned Julius here. For a very long time the House of Este held Ferrara as vicars of the Church and Reggio and Modena by imperial investiture. Until the reign of Julius II, there was no question but that these two cities were under imperial jurisdiction, and the Este rightly possessed them. That Pope, "the reviver of the old and almost forgotten rights of the Holy See and the author of much mischief under a pious title,"[52] made war upon the Duke of Ferrara for the purpose of reducing his duchy under Church control. First, he kept Modena for himself, together with other towns as far as the River Po, which he claimed had belonged to the Holy See as part of the old Exarchate of Ravenna. Shortly after, for fear of the French, he gave it up to the Emperor Maximilian. Julius continued his war against Alfonso and took Reggio from him. Guicciardini felt with others, that, if Julius had lived longer, he would also have taken Ferrara!

He could give many reasons for the strong papal hatred of the Este, for

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[50] Ibid., 47-48. Guicciardini commented here that, "in the midst of the battle and the din of temporal arms, the thunder of spiritual artillery began to rattle from all parts."

[51] Ibid., 47-48, 53-54.

[52] Ibid., IV, 278.

Julius was a bitter enemy of Alfonso. There were his pretensions to Ferrarese territory which once belonged to the Church in addition to his hostility to the Duke for having been friendly to the French. Perhaps the Pope's bitterness stemmed from the implacable hatred for the memory of his predecessor, Pope Alexander, whose daughter Lucrezia had been married to Alfonso and by whom she had several children. The reason for Julius' hatred of the Este did not alter its effects. To his successors he left Reggio and his ambition for recovering Ferrara. They believed that Julius' glorious reputation stemmed from these endeavors.[53]

His desire for the extension of Church boundaries soon gave way to the defense of his own.[54] Guicciardini detailed the manner in which Julius during all of 1510 drew farther and farther away from the French King as he veered toward the Emperor. Obstinately bent on a war, he inveighed bitterly against Louis, accusing him of calling himself unjustly a good Christian and of desiring Julius' destruction. How could he ever have sent troops against the Pope! Louis also contemplated the measures to be taken against the Pope if he would persist in his alliance with the Venetians and in his attempts to subject Ferrara.[55] The matters between Pope and King remained the same but each month became more aggravated.

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[53] Ibid., 278-279.

[54] Ibid., III, 45. Note Guicciardini's words: "Ma l'ardore che aveva il pontifice di offendere altri si converti in necessita di difendere le cose proprie."

[55] Ibid., 56, 61, 63.

Pope Julius' other problems did not diminish his desire to gain Bologna and Perugia. Bologna was under the control of the Bentivoglio and gave a nominal support to the Pope.[56] Already in 1506 Julius informed the Florentines that he wanted to clear the lands of the Church of tyrants and requested that their captain, Marcantonio Colonna, should serve him against the Bentivoglio. Though the Republic opposed this request because it would weaken their forces in their war to keep control of Pisa, the gonfaloniere did not want to anger the Pope and delayed giving an answer as long as he could.[57] The Bentivoglio were friendly to the French King, and Florence did not want to incur his wrath by attacking Bologna for the Pope. By 1511, Julius realized that he could not take it.[58]

Pope Julius also clashed with Louis over conciliarism. The French assembly which had threatened the Pope and empowered the King to raise money from the revenues of the French clergy, called a council to be held at Lyons the following March.[59] Conciliarism was indeed one of the major problems of the age, and a pope so involved in politics as Julius was most apt to become involved. Louis pressed for a council and was suspicious because Ferdinand did not agree.[60] To procure the good will of the princes and keep the council from

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[56] Ibid., II, 174-175.

[57] Storie fiorentine, p. 290.

[58] Storia d'Italia, III, 99.

[59] Ibid., 48.

[60] Ferdinand claimed that it seemed unwise to call a Church council while Italy was involved in war, ibid., 80-81.

materializing, Julius created eight cardinals.[61]

Louis XII went ahead with French plans, however, and summoned the Council of Pisa in 1511. The cardinals explained that they could lawfully call a council without papal sanction because it was obvious that the Church needed reform in both head and members, and it was clear that Julius did not intend to undertake it. They branded the Pope an inveterate simoniac, a man of infamous and abandoned manners, not fit to discharge the office of a pontiff. He had undertaken many wars and opened all Christendom to scandal. In this case, the power of convoking a council was lawfully theirs.

Cardinals who approved the Council of Pisa argued that the Fathers of the Council of Constance stated that a council should take place every ten years. Nothing else could keep the popes on the right path. Human nature was very frail and life subject to many temptations. How could the Church stand secure if a man with so much power knew that there were no checks on him?

Guicciardini also explained the other side of the conciliar question. Those who followed the theologians rather than the canonists siad only a pope could convoke a council, whatever his moral character. The only exception was heresy. Otherwise, and they pointed to history to justify their argument, anyone could disturb the state of the Church on any pretense, by ambition or reform. Louis' Pisan assembly, this papal group maintained, was not a council at all, but rather it was the foundation of a schism in the Church of God and a convention inspired by the devil.[62]

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[61] Ibid., 85.

[62] Guicciardini's account of conciliarism and Pisa is given in ibid., 102-103.

By the Cambrai agreement[63] none of the allies were to take the settlement of Church affairs upon themselves. Yet they went boldly on. For them, the political and the religious spheres constituted but one arena.[64] Even those who eagerly wanted reform were afraid of a Church council which, acting on conciliarist principles, could do more harm than good. In 1511 most of the Christian world was well aware that the Pope was at the mercy of fortune, militarily and politically. The Venetian troops allied with him were in even worse condition than his own who were scattered up and down the peninsula while Louis was victorious. If he wished, he could seize Rome and all the papal state. But the King did not follow up his victory either because of his reverence for religion or because he was afraid of incurring the wrath of the other princes if he went further.[65] Here again religion and politics were interlinked. Guicciardini observed, with an eye to the French defeat and withdrawal from Italy in 1512, that Louis, who requested papal pardon for these reasons, embraced certain patterns of action more out of piety perhaps than out of policy.[66]

Julius took measures to clear himself from the charge of negligence and summoned a rival Council of the Lateran. He condemned the cardinals who had convoked the one at Pisa. At the same time the King thought that papal friendship and peace were desperately needed to free himself from Charles'

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[63]The League of Cambrai was formed against Venice in December 1508 by Louis XII, Maximilian, Julius II and Ferdinand of Aragon.

[64]Similar problems were encountered by Clement VII. Cf. infra, Chap. IV.

[65]Storia d'Italia, III, 105.

[66]Ibid., 105-106.

importunate demands. He was manifestly cold to the Pisan Council, and, in an attempt to get Julius to agree to a peace, he rejected it entirely.[67]

In a period of illness, the Pope called a consistory and ordered the publication of a bull stating that the election of his successor should proceed canonically. No person was to ascend to so great a dignity as Julius himself had. Methods were set up against those who would use simony to be elected as pope and for annulling such an election. Guicciardini observed that the bull was scorned by certain cardinals who were already electioneering in the event of Julius' death.[68]

In the same year, 1511, Julius II showed his antagonism towards Louis by engaging in a conspiracy against France. The Florentine gonfaloniere had it enacted into law, if the Pope should attack Florence, allied with France, the Church revenues would be used for her defense.[69] Florence felt she had reason for animosity, for both she and Pisa had been excommunicated.[70]

Julius did not want peace with France even after her defeat at Ravenna. The entire papal court, which had been in fear of a march on Rome, now requested the Pope to conclude a peace which the French were then willing to negotiate. While he had acquired great glory, the cardinals pointed out, it was apparent that God wished the war against France to come to an end. To act in opposition

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[67] Ibid., 110, 116, 123.

[68] Ibid., 119-120.

[69] Sf. Storia d'Italia, III, 130-137.

[70] Ibid., 124.

to the Divine Will would bring about the ruin of the Church. If only the Pope would make peace according to the Gospel, he would free himself and the Church from trouble. But Julius would not listen to these appeals. Seeking to humiliate the French even more, he followed the advice of the Venetian and Spanish ambassadors and of Giulio de' Medici, who insisted that the French were weak and he could grind more out of them. He decided then to risk everything rather than conclude peace with his enemy.[71]

Julius negotiated with the Swiss for six thousand soldiers. The Pope claimed that he would send these mercenaries against Ferrara where the fatigued French troops wished for an end to the fighting. The French lost Cremona, Bergamo and Pavia. Parma and Piacenza voluntarily submitted to Julius, who held that they belonged to the Church as members of the Exarchate of Ravenna. This revolution in public affairs in 1512 centered on French losses and papal gains.[72]

Somewhat puzzled by the Pope's good fortune in spite of his reckless policy, Guicciardini noted that his bad fortune seemed at an end. A period of better luck was symbolized with the opening of the Lateran Council:

> ...very decent and very holy and of a force sufficient to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the hearts of men, if they could only make themselves believe that the leaders of the council had no ulterior motives but only what appeared from the obvious meaning of their words.[73]

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[71] Ibid., 193-194, 196-197.

[72] Ibid., 202-210.

[73] Ibid., 197, 199.

Besides the cynicism in Guicciardini's observation, there was a cautious pessimism. He did not feel that the assembled prelates were really sincere in their desire for Church reform.

Guicciardini criticized Julius' obstinate policy. The French ruler wanted peace in the face of successive defeats in Italy and the Pope looked to war as his inclination to peace, if he ever had any, diminished.[74] Rather, Julius thought it prudent policy at the end of 1512 to come to terms with the Emperor. He promised to aid him now against the Venetians temporally and spiritually. Guicciardini narrated that this volte face came almost immediately after the Pope had worn himself out "by exhortations, entreaties and menaces" that the preservation of the Venetian state was vital for the common good of Italy. This change in policy brought about a Venetian change too, and the Spaniards feared that they might now again ally with the French King.[75]

Pope Julius' great plans came to an end with his death in early 1513.[76] Just before, he ordered the publication of the earlier bull against simony to attain the pontifical office. He also insisted that the election of his successor belonged to the College of Cardinals and not to a council. Julius requested the College of Cardinals to grant the city of Pesaro to Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino, since by his efforts it had been restored to the Church on the death of Giovanni Sforza. He refused the urgent request of

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[74] Ibid., 199-201.

[75] Ibid., 241-242.

[76] Guicciardini wrote that Julius "ended the course of his painful life," ibid., 255-257.

Lady Felice, his daughter, and others, to create Guido da Montefalco a cardinal.[77] Julius argued simply that he was not worthy of the dignity.

Guicciardini wrote his view of Julius in life and when he died. In all respects, he retained his "usual constancy and severity, with the same judgment and vigor of mind which he enjoyed before his sickness."[78] Julius had built up a treasure for the Church even though he had heavy expenses. But already at the coronation of his successor, Leo X, it was being squandered. The splendor of Giovanni de' Medici's coronation did not please those who argued that so solemn an affair called for seriousness and moderation.[79]

Alfonso d'Este carried the solemn Standard of the Church. He had come to Rome in great hopes, since he counted on the "gentle disposition of the Pope"[80] who did suspend his censures at the coronation. Giulio de' Medici carried the Standard of the Knights of Rhodes.[81] He became Clement VII and was later intimately linked with the future of Guicciardini and the whole of Italy.

In April Guicciardini, still in Spain, was sufficiently far-sighted to send

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[77] The Lady Felice and Guido da Montefalco were brother and sister on their mother's side, ibid., 257.

[78] Ibid., 255-257.

[79] Ibid., 259-260.

[80] In an earlier writing, Guicciardini recalled the single consolation remaining at Lorenzo's death, his sons. The greatest of these, he thought, was the youthful Giovanni. In him there appeared "character and signs of probity and virtù," to the extent that it seemed that he would prove to be "ornamento di quella degnità e della Chiesa di Dio, e che se venissi mai tempo che el sommo pontificato si dessi per virtù, non per ambitione e corrottele, che vivendo lui insino alla età conveniente avessi sanza alcuno dubio a essere eletto," "Elogio," p. 288.

[81] Storia d'Italia, III, 259.

Leo X a letter brimming with sprightly devotion.[82] Doubtlessly he had heard of the fanfare attending the election of Pope Leo in March. Although it was Lent, Florence resembled a town celebrating the Carnival. For five days bonfires burned and floats were built. Each evening one of these was burned in front of the Medici domicile. The last one represented "peace" but was not burned in order to serve as an indication that wars would be at an end under the Florentine Pope.[83]

This early rejoicing in the city of the Medici could not conceive of the difficulties awaiting the peninsula during that very year. More and more the Italian situation grew tense as affairs pointed to war rather than peace.[84] Especially in those areas which had experienced French control, explained Guicciardini, there was real terror.[85]

From the very beginning of his pontificate, Leo worked to expel the French from Italy. Either he thought this was important to the security of the Church or he resented the personal injuries he had received from the Crown of France.[86]

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[82]Letter to Leo X, April 2, 1513, Carteggi, I, 161.

[83]Luca Landucci, Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516, ed. with notes by Iodoco del Badia (Firenze, 1883), p. 337.

[84]Storia d'Italia, III, 260. Note Guicciardini's words: Ma né la mutazione del pontefice né altri accidenti bastavano a stabilire la quiete d'Italia, anzi già apertamente cominciavano a indirizzarsi le cose alla guerra.

[85]Ibid., 262.

[86]The arrival of Charles VIII in Italy brought personal sorrow to Giovanni de' Medici, later Pope Leo. Both he and his brothers had been driven out of Florence. After Ravenna, he was taken as a prisoner to Milan and then into France, ibid., 266-267.

While his father, Lorenzo, and others of his family had been firmly attached to the French, Leo thought that Louis favored popular government and disliked the Medici. It seemed that, whenever King Louis, Francis' predecessor, had espoused their cause, it was only to use them as tools to draw the Florentines into a new French alliance. Once this was done, the King would again forget the Medici.[87]

Although the new reign had begun in a spirit of Franco-papal distrust,[88] Leo X attempted first to end the Pisan Council. He entered into negotiations with King Louis on whose will the entire meeting depended. Leo also denied the report that he had paid the Swiss to ravage Milan. Rather he declared his wish for peace among Christian princes. He was grieved that Louis, by separating himself from the Church, had deprived the Pope of the opportunity of demonstrating how much he was by nature inclined to be the King's friend. Louis realized that he could never hope to come to any agreement with the Pope in temporal concerns if their spiritual differences were not first composed. For a better opportunity to pursue his particular policies, he desired a reconciliation of his kingdom with the Church.[89] By virtue of his position as the spiritual leader of Christendom, Guicciardini stressed, the Pope would never be without an ally!

The Pope was not only reconciled to the French King but also to the

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[87] Ibid.

[88] The following pages on Pope Leo's politics refer both to Louis XII and to his successor, Francis I, who ascended the throne in 1515, almost three years after Leo became Pope. Leo's policies toward France and the Empire are handled topically rather than in a strict chronological way.

[89] Storia d'Italia, III, 282-284.

Emperor with whom he cooperated against the Venetians. This resulted in vast devastation of Venetian territory. Venice was alarmed by this association and considered it a sign that the Pope never intended to break with her enemies![90]

Venice's problems were indeed a microcosm of the problems of the whole Italian peninsula. The years 1514 to 1517 constituted one of the critical periods in sixteenth-century Italian history. Pope Leo sought to enlarge Church holdings and Medici power in the same operation. To protect the Italian states, he first tried to steer a middle course in the struggles of the French and Spanish kings and the Emperor, but then felt that he had to be allied with one or the other power for his own safety. In many cases, the Pope seemed to act against foreign powers out of family ambitions. The Aragonese King was convinced that the Pope wanted the Kingdom of Naples for his brother Giuliano.[91] Ferrara was also a temptation to Leo. Alfonso had promised to restore Reggio when his brother, Cardinal Ippolito d' Este, returned from exile in Hungary, but he delayed. Alberto Carpi, the imperial ambassador and a bitter enemy to Alfonso, urged Leo to follow Julius' glorious example of extending papal domains. Many pointed out to him that the acquisition of Ferrara would enable him to bestow this great state upon Giuliano.[92] Guicciardini felt that Leo did in fact, entertain this desire in favor of his brother and his nephew Lorenzo, but he was no less eager to get it after their

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[90] Storia d'Italia, III, 284-285.

[91] Ibid., 325.

[92] Ibid., 328.

deaths.[93]

Leo wanted Lorenzo to rule Florence. Under his jurisdiction, Florence was allied with the papacy.[94] Yet, according to Guicciardini, Leo wanted Ferrara more even than the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence. But his Medici relatives feared that the addition of Ferrara to the papal domain would make it more formidable to all its neighbors.[95] Leo also had designs upon Siena which he would bestow on one of his own choosing.[96]

Following an agreement made shortly before Julius' death, the Emperor gave the Pope the city of Modena for forty thousand ducats. Leo wanted to erect Modena, Reggio, Parma and Piacenza into a vicariate to be bestowed on Giuliano along with Ferrara whenever the Medici could take it. Here too, Leo manifested the close connection between political opportunism and family ambition. Guicciardini noted how jealous the French King was over the Modenese agreement, for to him it was proof of papal agreements with his imperial enemy.[97]

In Guicciardini's judgment, Pope Leo had unwise advisors who goaded him into hasty action. In 1515, for example, these counsellors argued that King Louis might encourage Alfonso of Ferrara to seek to recover Modena and Reggio and return the Bentivoglio to Bologna. It seemed a wiser policy for the Pope to cultivate the friendship of the Este and the Bentivoglio by giving up these

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[93] Ibid., IV, 279-280.

[94] Ibid., III, 328.

[95] Ibid., IV, 279.

[96] Ibid., III, 381. Guicciardini's words are "confidente a se."

[97] Ibid., IV, 279, and III, 329.

territories to them of his own will.[98]

Leo feared also that the Franco-Spanish truce of 1514 and the cooperation of Henry VIII meant they would intensify their attempts to gain the peninsula. Leo remained firm in his early resolution, that the common liberty of Italy would go down the drain if the Duchy of Milan were taken by the Emperor or by the French.[99]

He knew well what the French King was preparing for and that he wanted the Pope on his side. In spite of the truce, the Emperor wanted an alliance with Leo for the defense of Italy. He argued that together they could defend Milan against Louis, since they had proved they were powerful enough to drive him from it.[100]

To Leo, peace was important. If it were achieved, there would be no need for alliances of any sort. Guicciardini, surveying the larger complex of Italian affairs, gave Leo credit for his attempts to act prudently in his dealings with the foreign rulers for defense of the various states. The Pope pleaded with Louis, and he tried hard to bring about an agreement between the Emperor and Venice. The Venetian Senate, thinking that its people were secure from French troops in 1514, considered the adjustment of their differences with Maximilian, but no treaty materialized.[101]

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[98] Ibid., 353.

[99] Ibid., 314-316.

[100] Ibid., 334-336.

[101] Ibid., 316-317, 319.

Then the growing power of the Sultan complicated Leo's irresolution as to how to proceed. Guicciardini felt that it would be a disgrace for the Pope to encourage Christian princes to go to war with one another. At the moment he should rather advise Francis to stop his preparations. Francis' enemies would make a French victory a blood bath.

Nevertheless, Francis continued to demand papal help and approval for his Milanese plans. Though Francis did not know it, Leo intended to oppose any foreign attempts on northern Italy. Just how he would do this was not clear. He was "spurred on by his inclinations and restrained by his fears."[102] At times Leo tried to convince himself that perhaps reverence for the Church might keep the King from molesting the papal states even though he might attack other areas. But the Pope would think himself equally injured whether the French attacked the papal states or the other Italian areas in which he had interests.

After the Marignano victory[103] Pope Leo had to accept the King's friendship lest his forces drive the Medici out of Florence. And Leo had to uphold his family's position. Finally he ratified an agreement with the French ruler. An agreement seemed wiser than inviting a French attack upon Parma and Piacenza or even Florence.[104]

The alliance required the King to protect the Pope and states of the church, Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici and Florence and to grant lordships in

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[102] Ibid., 336.

[103] On September 14, 1515, Francis reconquered Milan by his brilliant victory over the Swiss at Marignano.

[104] Storia d'Italia, IV, 370-371.

France and pensions to Giuliano and Lorenzo. The Pope was to recall his troops from Verona where they were assisting the Emperor against Francis' new ally, Venice, and he was to restore Parma and Piacenza to the French. As compensation for this papal loss, the Duchy of Milan was to buy all its salt from Cervia, where the Church owned the salt mines. The Pope was to grant free passage through papal territories to French troops on their way to Naples. To get papal consent for an attack in the south, the King offered large estates to Leo's brother and nephews.[105]

Leo quickly seized the Duchy of Urbino and conferred it upon his nephew, Lorenzo,[106] so that he could devote all his attention to Ferrara. Guicciardini explained the Pope's almost excessive interest in Ferrara. Either he had been prompted by animosity toward Duke Alfonso or the ambition to equal the glory of Julius II.[107] He indicated that Pope Leo hated Alfonso even more than Julius though he did not bring this out into the open.[108]

By the end of 1519 he conspired to gain Ferrara once again.[109] It was financially and militarily strong, for the Dukes of Este had realized the precarious position of their state. Leo apparently did not know this and judged Ferrara to be weak. Deceit was more likely to succeed than open force.

Leo judged that the duchy could be entered through a broken wall where no

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[105] Ibid., 370-372.

[106] Ibid., 398.

[107] Ibid., IV, 64.

[108] Ibid., 279.

[109] Ibid., 63-64. Note Guicciardini's words, suggestive of Leo's cleverness: "...non con armi manifeste ma con insidie."

garrison was stationed. When the Marquis of Mantua found out about the plot he informed Alfonso, who found it difficult to believe. In any event, things had been well worked out and Guicciardini felt that, in spite of the duchy's strength, the plot might well have succeeded. Alfonso could have put up but little resistance because of his poor health. Many citizens were dissatisfied with his administration and would not have risked their lives in time of attack.[110] In any event, Leo failed. But he went on to new intrigues and in 1520 failed again.[111] He had been clever enough to oblige those princes with whom he had made alliances not to reveal his maneuvers against Ferrara.[112]

However, the most serious problem of Italy was the struggle for power after Maximilian's death. Pope Leo was interested above all in this silent war for he feared the accession of either Francis or Charles to the imperial title as a great danger to the balance of power and to the security of the Holy See and all Italy. He saw that both princes were already so powerful that he had equal reason to fear the victory of either one of them and he knew that nothing could hinder the victor from subjecting the whole peninsula.[113]

By 1521, Charles V and Francis I saw more clearly than ever that they had to have papal friendship if they were to succeed and both tried hard to get it. Guicciardini thought that peace would have been possible had Leo remained

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[110] Ibid., 63-64, 66, 279.

[111] Ibid., 72-73.

[112] Ibid., 279.

[113] Ibid., 57, 78. Since the matter was "far too important for Leo to depend upon papal authority with the Electors, he had to devise more clever means to control the imperial election," ibid., 57-60.

neutral and used his papal authority to repress the enmity between Emperor and King. But Leo acted more to disturb the peace than preserve it. When all was considered, what would he gain by war? It had brought him little success in the past. In 1521 he controlled extensive papal estates, and he had full authority over the city of Florence. Leo's love of pleasures and splendor would ordinarily have made him opposed to war. Then too he did not have the money needed for a great military campaign. But unfortunately, Guicciardini stressed, he was "tormented with a restless desire" to recover Parma and Piacenza and to get Ferrara. Guicciardini did not believe the possession of these cities was "a sufficient reason for him [Leo] to turn the world upside down." Rather he could have temporized in expectation of the right time to move.[114]

When Guicciardini looked back upon the status quo of 1521, he saw that the Habsburg-Valois clash was inevitable. Still Leo ought to have been working for peace. Guicciardini saw in Leo the case of a pope suffering from man's greatest enemy, too much prosperity. Not only does it ruin one's government but inclines him to be bold in doing evil.[115]

In spite of all that could be advanced against war, Leo devoted his attention to forming an alliance to carry on an Italian war. Leo explained that, since both Charles and Francis were unsuccessful in allying with him, they would cooperate against the Church and all Italy. Whatever the Pope's arguments

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[114] Ibid., 77-79.

[115] Ibid., 78-79. Note Guicciardini's words: "...non hanno gli uomini maggiore inimico che la troppa prosperità, perché gli fa impotenti di se medesimi, licenziosi e arditi al male e cupidi di turbare il bene proprio con cose nuove."

Guicciardini judged him guilty of breaking the peace.[116]

Cardinal de' Medici, to whom Leo confided all his secrets,[117] told Guicciardini of the Pope's plan. If the French could be ousted from Milan and Genoa, it would be easy to force the Emperor out of Naples with French aid. Leo thought that he could get the King to assist him by creating some of his candidates cardinals and by granting other favors. To Guicciardini, Francis would want more for his loss of Milan and Genoa, and would not be satisfied with seeing that his rival had met with no better fortune than he had![118]

Though trusting neither, Leo treated with both sides though more closely with Francis. To prevent attack while negotiations were pending, he kept six thousand Swiss soldiers in the Romagna and the Marca for several months. To the Italians who thought this was a needless expense during peacetime, Leo said it was to protect the papal states from rebels against his authority. No one believed him but thought rather the troops were a defensive measure against the French or an indication that Leo planned to attack Ferrara immediately or drive Charles out of Naples.[119]

The Franco-papal treaty under negotiation provided for a joint attack on Naples, part of the territory to go to the Pope, the rest to the second son of Francis. The King was to assist the Pope against rebellious feudatories of the Church.

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[116] Ibid., 131.

[117] Guicciardini was a confidant of Giulio de' Medici, the future Clement VII. Note his words: "...come io udi poi dire al cardinale de' Medici conscio de tutti i suoi secreti....," ibid., 79.

[118] Ibid., 79-80.

[119] Ibid., 80.

Francis suspected that Leo's heart was not in their plans so he allied with the Swiss and retook Navarre. He came to realize that the Pope would not want him to take Naples for himself or his children. Actually, French possession of both Naples and Milan would constitute a real threat to Rome and upset the balance of power in Italy. Francis' advisers showed him how foolish it would be to take the chance of losing Milan while he tried to get Naples. The Pope would use deceit to drive him out of Milan while he was occupied in southern Italy. Thus Francis put off ratification of the Franco-papal agreement made in Rome.[120]

Leo began to see the advantage of a treaty with the Emperor. He was concerned over the King's procrastination. Guicciardini frankly could not see the reason for the new papal-imperial concord. Was it to recover Parma and Piacenza, or was the Pope provoked over the insolence of Lautrec and his ministers, who refused to allow any papal decrees to be promulgated.[121]

Whatever the reasons, the Pope and the Emperor agreed to war against Milan. Charles was glad to be allied with the Pope, for the Lutheran problem was disturbing the Empire. Their agreement provided for the common defense of both parties, mentioning with the Pope the House of Medici and Florence and declared the reinstatement of Francesco Sforza in Milan and the defense of his authority there.[122] The papal-imperial forces were to retake Parma and

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[120] Ibid., 80-82.

[121] Ibid., 82-83.

[122] Sforza was then in exile at Trent, ibid., 83.

Piacenza for the Church. After the conquest of Milan, the Emperor was to aid the Pope in quelling disorders among his subjects in the papal states, and aid him in getting Ferrara. In the agreement, Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici was promised a pension of ten thousand ducats from the newly-vacant archbishopric of Toldeo, and an estate in Naples with an annual revenue of ten thousand ducats was to be given to Alessandro de' Medici.[123]

They geared all plans to the campaign against Milan. It was to be attacked from the borders of the papal dominions by the Pope's soldiers, the Florentines and troops of Giovan Francesco Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua, a general of the Church. These were to be joined by Charles' army from Naples in addition to some Germans.[124]

Guicciardini reconstructed a speech of Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, in which he argued in favor of a Franco-imperial agreement rather than one between the Pope and the Emperor. To support his argument, he referred to the papal-imperial alliance of 1521 when Pope Leo was anything but trustworthy. The Pope had a selfish desire for security from the French or, more likely, an uncontrolled desire to take Ferrara.[125] There was duplicity also in imperial ranks. Pope Leo, who bore the greatest exposure during the attack on Parma, and many others, suspected the treachery of their commanders. It seemed very likely that these jealous officers were responsible for ending the siege of

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[123] Ibid., 82-84. Cf. also ibid., 308, for Guicciardini's reasons the war begun by Pope Leo and Charles V.

[124] Ibid., 91.

[125] Ibid., 342, 280.

French-controlled Milan, for they thought that the Pope would discontinue the expensive war as soon as he would recover Parma and Piacenza.[126]

The Swiss, who had been hired to defend the papal states and not to attack French holdings, decided that they would not attack and favored marching upon Parma and Piacenza.[127] The papal-imperial armies also laid siege to Parma. Alfonso d'Este began to war against the Pope in Modena for his own safety and to satisfy the French King. Guicciardini explained that the Duke's ill-fortune in this war would soon have reduced him to serious straits had Leo not died just when he was achieving continual victories.[128] The army of the allies was victorious at Milan, and Lodi and Pavia fell to the League. Leo received news of the acquisition of Parma and Piacenza at the time of his death.[129] The anti-French cause weakened considerably at the time of his death. Francis, well aware that the war had been "begun and supported" by Pope Leo, undoubtedly resumed courage at the death of so powerful an enemy.[130] The Pope was admirably successful in still another of his major aims, bringing the Medici to renewed glory.[131]

Leo in Guicciardini's judgment was "a prince worthy of being praised as well as blamed on many accounts, who did not live up to what was expected of him." He had not been given credit for the prudence he showed at times but

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[126] Ibid., 109.

[127] Ibid., 111, 120.

[128] Ibid., 280. Guicciardini observed that Leo's death was "just as well-timed for Alfonso's purposes as that of Julius."

[129] Ibid., 130-131.

[130] Ibid., 130-133

[131] Ibid., 327.

there was in him "much less goodness" than any had suspected.[132] In political affairs, Leo was careful to cover up his deceit.

In his judgment of Leo X, Guicciardini gave his views on his own age and on the general character of the men who occupied the papal chair. Leo was good as far as in general men are concerned, for he was merciful, charitable and not inclined to offend anyone. Guicciardini continued:

> I dare not say [that Leo was] of an apostolical goodness, for in our corrupt times the goodness of a pope is commended when it does not exceed the wickedness of other men.[133]

The Pope's greatest fault was his excessive liberality. The splendor and magnificence he displayed would have been dazzling even in a descendant of kings and emperors! But Leo's liberality extended also to the purely spiritual matters of his office, for he bestowed "all the favors which are at the disposal of a pope."[134] There were thirty-nine cardinals at the conclave electing his successor though, at his accession, there were only twenty-four. Prior to the conclave which elected Adrian of Tortosa as pope, Giulio tried to gain the votes of those cardinals who had benefited by Leo's favors.[135] Guicciardini charged that Leo "brought the spiritual authority into contempt, disordered the economy of the court and, because of his excessive expenses, found it continually necessary to raise money by extraordinary means."[136]

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 328.

[134] Ibid., 327-328.

[135] Ibid., 143-144.

[136] Ibid., 328.

The careers of Giovanni and Giulio de' Medici were closely linked. The assistance of Pope Leo's cousin, Giulio, whom he raised to the cardinalship despite his illegitimate birth, was fortune's greatest gift. Leo allowed Giulio to manage all the important affairs of the pontificate. He restrained Leo's liberality and moderated many disorders proceeding from Leo's irresolution. Giulio's serious demeanor and his diligence contrasted with Leo's indolence, prodigality and inordinate love of pleasure and mirth. It was commonly believed that Leo was easy-going, kind and desirous of enjoying his reign and that Giulio was high-spirited, restless and ambitious. Leo did not seem qualified for his important charge and was dominated by Giulio. Many logically assumed that Giulio had instigated the alliances, campaigns and conspiracies of Leo's time. When Giulio became Clement VII almost two years later, it became evident that he had been "rather the executor of his Leo's plans than their director."[137]

Leo's immediate successor was Adrian, Cardinal of Tortosa. Although his name was proposed one morning only to pass time, he was unanimously elected pope at so troublesome a time in the states of the Church.[138] Guicciardini found it incredible that many of those who hardly knew Adrian by name voted for him. He had in no way ingratiated himself with the other cardinals and, above all, he was a foreigner who had never seen Italy or had any hopes of seeing it!

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[137] Ibid., 328-330.

[138] Ibid., 145-146.

Unaware of its own reasons for electing the Fleming, the Sacred College tried to justify this extraordinary step. They placed the blame, commented Guicciardini cynically, on the Holy Spirit, Who, it is said, inspires the cardinals in papal elections.[139]

Adrian's distant residence intensified disturbances in the Church territories. The Sacred College urged Cardinal Giulio de' Medici to go to Bologna to direct the recovery of Rimini, which had been seized by Sigismondo Malatesta, and squelch disorder in the Romagna. The cardinals promised that he would have the assistance of Marquis Gonzaga of Mantua. Guicciardini explained that the ambition of the cardinals was the reason that no measure for control of the papal states took effect. Cardinal de' Medici's enemies prevented the passage of every resolution which would tend to increase his position.

Adrian's arrival would probably settle the confusion. To Guicciardini, without the pope, Rome was more like a desert than a city. But even those who were impatient for the Pope's coming were uneasy because he was a foreigner inexperienced in the affairs of Italy, the papal court, and even those nations which were familiar to Italy. A plague in Rome at the time of his arrival seemed to be a bad omen.[140] Guicciardini later confessed that the papal courtiers were not displeased at Adrian's early death, for they wished the papal chair to be occupied, if not by an Italian, at least by one educated in

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[139] Ibid., 146. Note Guicciardini's words: "Della quale estravaganza, non potendo con ragione alcuna escussarsi, trasferivano la colpa nello Spirito Santo, solito, secondo dicevano, a ispirare nella elezione de' pontefici i cuori de' cardinali...."

[140] Ibid., 168, 170-171.

their country.[141]

After Adrian arrived in Rome, conditions got worse rather than better. Because he was inexperienced, the cardinals flaunted his orders and kept the castles they had taken from the Church. As governor of Modena and Reggio, Guicciardini was in a position to learn of their conspiracies and he dutifully informed the Pope. Once again, Adrian ordered them to restore these castles to the Church.[142]

But Adrian understood some of the problems which had long been the causes of rivalry. He wanted first to recover Rimini[143] and to settle the differences between Alfonso of Ferrara and his two predecessors. During his first month in Italy, he reinvested Alfonso with Ferrara and with all the Church lands he had possessed before Leo's war with France. The Duke bound himself to assist the Church whenever the Pope needed soldiers for the defense of its territories. Under penalty of forfeiting his rights as duke he would refrain from injuring the Holy See in the future. Adrian led Alfonso to believe that he would restore Modena and Reggio to him, but then he realized that this would not be a wise step and refused flatly. Good will between the papacy and Ferrara could hardly last. In 1523, however, Adrian gained Rimini.[144]

Adrian was well aware of the difficult situation in which he, as a foreign pope, was placed in view of the imperial interests in Italy. Before his

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[141] Ibid., 195.

[142] Ibid., 196.

[143] Cf. supra, p. 125.

[144] Storia d'Italia, IV, 171, 174, 280.

arrival in Rome, he had been reluctant to wait for the homage which the Emperor had promised to render as he proceeded southward. He suspected that Charles wished him to put off his passage into Italy while awaiting his homage and he did not wish to give basis to the view that imperial interests would dictate his policies as pope.[145]

Actually, Adrian VI hoped for a general peace in Christendom. He entreated Charles, Francis and Henry to end the war, especially in view of the Turkish menace. Negotiations for peace proved fruitless. The Emperor did not want a short truce because he would gain nothing, and Francis would not consent to a long one. Adrian thought that Francis did not really want peace and, influenced by his earlier friendship for Charles, went over to the imperial side. He explained that his obligation as the Vicar of Christ was to preserve peace among the faithful and to be zealous for the public welfare. He had no choice other than to join with those "who labored to prevent disturbances in Italy because on that depended the peace of the whole world."[146] In the late summer of 1523, an anti-French league was formed under papal headship. Adrian desired the members to promise that they would act on the principles of justice rather than on military might.[147] Venice was the only Italian state which refused to join.

The death of Pope Adrian less than a month after the conclusion of the

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[145] Ibid., 170.

[146] Ibid., 187-189. Emphasis added.

[147] "Sulla proposta fatta ai Veneziani d'entrare nella lega contro i Francesi," Scritti politici, p. 120.

league weakened it and led also to renewed difficulties in the papal states. Not only were the allies deprived of his pontifical authority but also of the subsidies which he was bound to provide under the terms of the treaty, Guicciardini explained frankly.[148] The Duke of Ferrara determined to take advantage of the opportunity, before the election of a new pope, to recover Reggio and Modena. Guicciardini referred to his own role in intercepting Alfonso's attempts to take Modena. It was important because it was near to Bologna and contributed to the unity of the Church domains. Moreover, it was convenient for aid and provisions in time of war. The separation of Reggio and Modena from the papal state would only enable the Duke of Milan to gain Parma and Piacenza with ease.[149]

At the end of the year 1523, the papacy continued to occupy the center of both the local and the European scene. Alfonso d'Este's actions were based on a desire shared by all Roman nobles, namely, the weakening of papal esteem.[150] Pope Adrian's successor inherited this problem which had beset the bishops of Rome for centuries, and, with it, the necessity to assume a role in the European power struggle unconscionable even to his immediate predecessors.

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[148] Ibid., 194-195.

[149] Cf. Storia d'Italia, IV, 196-206, for the details of Guicciardini's role.

[150] Ibid., 205.

CHAPTER IV

THE BASES OF PAPAL POLITICS: CLEMENT VII

The events of Clement VII's pontificate are detailed with the political and diplomatic struggles in the Storia d'Italia. Many problems at one time local became entangled with foreign problems under Clement VII, like Alfonso of Ferrara's alliance to maintain his territories against papal claims.

The present chapter will stress the policy of Pope Clement, as Guicciardini knew it from personal experience and explained it in his political tracts, and its relation to the regnum and the sacerdotium.[1] This consideration demanded analysis, for the political struggles of the sixteenth-century involved also the claim of Charles V to the full exercise of his imperial powers. What he maintained these powers actually were conditioned his relationship to Clement VII. Secondly, since conciliarism was not only a religious problem but also a politically useful tool for enemies of papal power, this chapter will discuss the calls for a general council. Thirdly, it will treat Guicciardini's defense of Clement VII. Guicciardini was personally involved here, for he was one of the Pope's major advisers on foreign policy.

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[1] The regnum refers to the fullness of power in the supreme temporal authority and the sacerdotium to the fullness of power in the supreme spiritual authority.

After a fifty-day conclave, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici succeeded Adrian VI as Pope in 1523. Under Leo, he had already handled many papal duties.[2] Guicciardini was surprised that Giulio had tried so hard even before Adrian's election to win his own, for a pope had to cope with the explosive situation in all Italy and the papal states in particular.

Guicciardini claimed that Clement's accession brought security to the Church's territory. With the election of the strong-willed Giulio, Alfonso d'Este temporarily abandoned his hopes of obtaining Modena, while he felt also that he could not trust the French who promised help. The Romagna, one of the most faction-ridden regions in Italy, became quiet.[3]

Yet Clement's troubles had not really begun. Guicciardini indicated that, as Cardinal, he was known to have favored the projects of Charles V and to have encouraged his Italian ambitions.[4] As pope, he understood that continued friendliness to the Emperor might only hurt his own position.[5]

During his entire reign, Pope Clement was faced with the delicate political problem of how to maintain papal position in the power struggle. For a short time he attempted to maintain the neutrality of the Holy See and to secure peace between Francis I and the Emperor, then he tried to use the force of papal diplomacy to assure the political autonomy of the peninsula

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[2]Cf. supra,

[3]Storia d'Italia, IV, 209-211.

[4]E. g., cf. supra

[5]"Giustificazione della politica," p. 203.

or at least the Medici sphere of interest.[6] He sought a delicate equilibrium between France and the Empire, to be adjusted by the application of his own diplomatic weight.[7] But numerous and unstable variables existed, namely, the Pope's irresolute temperament[8] and the conflicting views of his political advisers.[9] Clement pursued no one course.

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[6]Clement's neutrality came to an end in December 1524 when he concluded a secret agreement with Venice and France against the Emperor.

The Pope did not mean to defy the Emperor as much as to guarantee status quo in Italy, but the new shift to France produced a holocaust in the peninsula which rumbled all over Europe. On the very day of the publication of the treaty, Clement explained in a letter to Charles that the agreement with Francis was a "counsel of peace," designed to secure "our tranquillity" and the welfare of Christendom without prejudice to the Emperor or thought of private advantage, Monumenta saeculi XVI historiam illustrantia, p. 50, no. 35. The treaty was described to Henry VIII as a device to end the war and to protect the Holy See, ibid., no. 38, and to the German Electors as an attempt to guarantee the Pope, Venice and France freedom from harm in a pact which was by no means hostile to the Empire, no. 47.

[7]Cf. Pandolfi, pp. 145-149, 170-237.

[8]One of Guicciardini's passages pointed up this difficulty of the Pope: he regretted that he had sat idly by awaiting the success of the Battle of Pavia, for he was reproached for his timidity by his whole court and all Italy!, Storia d'Italia, V, 10.

[9]In politics, Cardinal Sadoleto, unlike many in the Curia, did not think in terms of Modena or even of Italy but rather of Christian Europe. He argued that the political role of the Holy See should not be that of a self-interested party but that of a father towards his son, Arch. Vat., Nunz. diverse 238, fol. 88^{v}, cited in Douglas, p. 39. Sadoleto stood for strict neutrality and political detachment but Clement was also subject to discordant theories of involvement pressed on him by Giberti and the imperialist Nicholas von Schomberg. Castiglione and Cardinal Salviati, however, assured him of Charles' peaceful intentions. ibid., pp. 39, 43-44. Although the Pope gave his secretary, Sadoleto, a free hand with dispatches of nuncios to Germany and eastern Europe, he personally dealt with those involving Italian affairs and therefore with envoys to the Emperor and Francis I, ibid., p. 40.

In the spring of 1525, it seemed to Clement a wise policy to conclude a treaty of "perpetual alliance and friendship" with Charles. Guicciardini confessed that the Pope's association with the Emperor at this point seemed well-founded, but he criticized the provisions of their agreement which called for the return of Reggio, Rubiera and other towns seized from the Church by Alfonso d'Este. It was clear to Guicciardini that Clement would have continued the policies of Julius and Leo for the recovery of Church lands had not more serious problems come to demand his attention. As it was, the very critical juncture of Italian affairs called for the reconciliation of Alfonso and Clement and not for further trouble between them. Guicciardini castigated the Pope for having selfishly irritated his country's wounds instead of having sought a method of healing them. He was certainly not to be compared to those physicians who laid aside all care of lesser bodily problems as they diligently attended to that which seemed essential to the patient's over-all health.

Still Guicciardini paid no heed to the widespread though ignorant criticism of the Pope for having made this treaty, namely, that he had failed in his duty of uniting the Italians against the Emperor. In April 1525 Guicciardini was not yet convinced that the imperial army could possibly successfully be resisted.[10]

While Guicciardini and Machiavelli were studying the military potential of the Romagna in mid-1525 in an attempt to work out this necessary system

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[10] Ibid., IV, 275-281.

of defense against the imperial forces in Lombardy, the Pope warmly greeted the Constable of Bourbon, then ominously at large in northern Italy.[11] It was firebrands like these that Guicciardini, Clement's principal military adviser as well as governor of the Romagna, was desperately trying to immobilize! In one of the most critical periods of the papal reign, Clement seemed most undecided about a method of procedure and allowed his diplomacy, as that of Leo X's period, to be steered into several directions.

Guicciardini's detailed account of Clement's activities in the Storia d'Italia clearly indicates that his commitment to the League of Cognac in May 1526, if it accomplished nothing else, at least simplified the problems of papal diplomacy. Guicciardini defended Clement's desire to ally with France though he knew that he could not find firm support there until King Francis was freed. Policies of neutrality, equilibrium and appeasement gave way to war. Since the fighting was concentrated in Italy, most of the negotiations with the imperialists were conducted directly between representatives of both sides in Rome. Curial business came to be concentrated primarily on military matters.[12]

After the sack of Rome in the spring of 1527, however, disagreement among the Pope's advisers, both clerical and lay, was intensified. Cardinal Sadoleto confessed that autumn: "We found ourselves in conflicting opinion

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[11] Monumenta saeculi XVI, p. 159, no. 115.

[12] Douglas, p. 51.

and thoroughly confused about what we should do."[13] But Guicciardini, who had a realistic knowledge of affairs, already saw the way matters were tending in September of 1526 when he was informed that the armies of the Church were to retreat across the Po. For many months he had tried to make the best of a situation rendered difficult by the failure of the signatories of the League of Cognac to honor their obligations and a lack of cooperation among them. The prestige of the League began to wane, and diplomacy proved to be no substitute for action. Guicciardini's continued attempts to bolster Clement's flagging courage had little effect. His deep conviction that the enemy could be easily overcome because they were "few in number and had little money" fell on deaf ears. He came to see that this undertaking which had once seemed "easy and secure" was now "difficult and dangerous," for "the will not to win" had settled like a cloud over the papal camp.[14] The sack of Rome, for all the other factors involved, was but the culmination of a lengthy succession of problems which the allies did not meet successfully.

Guicciardini's long service to Clement, especially at this critical juncture of war, prompted him to urge that the Pope must not allow his leadership to fail, hence, he should avoid any cooperation with the Emperor. He believed that this policy was essential even when matters seemed desperate.

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[13]The curial counsellors could agree only to send nuncios to all the kings and princes, informing them of the plight of Hungary and the urgency of peace, as well as of the Colonna's humiliating assault on Rome, Monumenta saeculi XVI, p. 244, no. 185.

[14]Letter to Giammatteo Giberti, July 31, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 69. "...la voluntà di non vincere ha facto questa impresa, di facile et sicura, difficile et pericolosa...."

A continuation or revival of the devious and uncertain course that Clement had followed would have fatal implications for Italy. The sack of Rome was not the only event that gave reason to Guicciardini's judgment. Even more important and more deadly for the libertà d'Italia was Clement's capitulation to Charles V the following month. Guicciardini thought it so humiliating that he resigned office.

The evolution of Guicciardini's thinking on the papal role can be learned from a study of his political writings during the crucial years from 1525 to 1530. He pointed out to Clement that rulers should always have the desire that things remain stable. Tranquillity alone would enable them to maintain their greatness and dignity. Since adversity could come at any time, however, they had to have a reserve of prudence and strength upon which to draw.[15]

Guicciardini was determined to unravel the diplomatic complexities in which the Pope bound himself. He considered the dangers involved to learn which ones were certain and which were lesser in their bad effects. It would be foolish to run away from an uncertain danger and unwise to flee a certain one, similarly to take a remedy against an evil that is just as dangerous as the end itself.[16] These were Guicciardini's criteria for studying the directions which Clement's policy should take.

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[15]"Sulla proposta di alleanza fatta da Carlo V a Clemente VII," Scritti politici, p. 153. Note Guicciardini's words: "...bisogna che el principe abbia prudenzia e virilità per potere usare l'una e l'autra nelle avversità simili."

[16]Ibid.

He directed his examination to the grounds for undertaking a war against the Emperor.[17] He knew well that the spiritual and the temporal powers, the sacerdotium and the regnum, did not operate in vacuo but rather as part of the white-hot political milieu of the early Cinquecento.

On the one hand, he thought it would be most dangerous to allow a build-up of power though, on the other, it would be very dangerous to run head on against Charles.[18] It was right to believe that he wished to increase his power primarily by achieving the dominion of Italy to which he had very easy access. He was young, powerful and fortunate in all his undertakings and he had the advantage of being able to cloak his undertakings with apparent lawfulness.[19] In fact, where there was some lawful basis, princes could actually convince themselves that their undertakings were very just and holy.[20] Moreover, a majority of the Emperor's ministers ardently stimulated him to direct all his aims and efforts to a monarchy based on Italy as the focal

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[17] Ibid., p. 154. To the Pope, Guicciardini explained: "... o la volontá di Dio o la disposizione de' fati che le cose tue sono ridotte in grandissimo difficultá."

[18] Ibid. Cf. Guicciardini's words: "...sei adunche in termine che è pericolo a stare, pericolo a fare."

[19] "Giustificazione della politica," p. 201. Guicciardini's words are: "...el quale aveva facultá di coprire le imprese ambiziose con titoli apparenti di ragione."

[20] Ibid., p. 206. Guicciardini here states: "...che dove hanno qualche apparenzia di ragione si persuadono facilmente le imprese sue essere giustissime e santissime."

point.[21] An ambitious prince could easily believe that all his policies were wise, especially when they were lauded and supported by his advisers.[22]

Since Charles V aimed at total monarchical power, where did the fortunes of Clement VII fit in? Guicciardini looked not only to the specific details of Cinquecento political reality but also to the historic conflict between regnum and sacerdotium, since the oldest reason that the popes feared imperial encroachment was grounded in experience. Only rarely was there a state of concord and cooperation between the two powers.[23] This did not surprise Guicciardini, for the pope claimed that spiritual care belonged to him and the emperor claimed that he was the administrator of all temporal concerns and in law, the lord of the whole world. Yet, in Guicciardini's historical reading, neither was wholly satisfied with the province assigned to him:

> Sono queste dua potestá, cioè la spirituale e la temporale, nomi ed effetti diversi, ma tanto bene corrispondono e quadrano l'una con l'altra, che sempre e' príncipi hanno cercato di unirle quanto hanno potuto: però ed e' pontifici pigliano spesso più della autorità temporale che non ricerca l'officio loro, ed e' principi secolari, sempre quando n'hanno avuto occasione, si sono fatti padroni dello spirituale.[24]

He attempted to discover the basis of this desire and noted that these ever numerous examples in history demonstrated the union of spiritual and

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[21] Ibid., p. 201. Guicciardini here writes: "si sapeva che era ardentemente stimolato da molti suoi ministri di aprire el seno a tanto favore della fortuna, e dirizzare lo animo a fare uno monarchia, della quale era el principale fondamento stabilire a voto suo le cose t'Italia."

[22] "Proposta di alleanza," p. 155.

[23] "Giustificazione della politica," p. 201. Note Guicciardini's words: "... rare volte tra queste dua supreme potestá e stata vera unione e concordia."

[24] Ibid.

temporal rule. Among the Hebrews, many times one man was both prince and high priest and, if not one man, then the high priest, usually a son, brother or nephew, was a creation of the prince and dependent upon him. The Romans felt the emperor was the "Pontifex Maximus."

Guicciardini explained that, in the Christian era, the precepts of religion did not permit this conjunction to be easy. The early emperors, though Christians, wanted the papacy to be dependent upon them. They had such great authority that no papal election could be effective without their confirmation.[25]

Guicciardini looked to the very recent past to confirm his statements on imperial ambition: Still fresh is the memory of Maximilian, Charles V's grandfather, who, as a widower, planned to make himself pope.[26] Since countless rulers have desired to unite spiritual power to the temporal on their climb to universal rule, Guicciardini wondered if any would marvel if Charles had a similar thought?[27] The Emperor's politics were unquestionably medieval in character.

The papal states and Rome together with Florence could not help but

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 202. Guicciardini noted this as only one of Maximilian's chimère. Cf. also "Proposta di alleanza," p. 155.

[27] "Ragioni che consigliano a Clemente VII di accordarsi con Carlo V: In Contrario," p. 184. Note Guicciardini's words: "...sempre chi è stato grande ha desiderato unire alla potenzia temporale la autorità spirituale.... Che ci maraviglieremo se uno pensiero simile nascerà in Cesare presente, quando veggiamo che per le pedate degli altri grandi tende al cammino della monarchia?"

attract the attention of a man who sought universal rule.[28] One who had struck at Venetian and French power would find the power of every pope, but especially that of Clement, very formidable.[29] The Pope had to watch all princes who had an opportunity to obtain these territories. It was logical to assume that the safest method for France to strike at the Pope would be by an attack on Florence. Critics of Francis I could not construe this as irreverence for the Church.[30] Above all others, however, Clement had to

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[28]Guicciardini felt that the French would realize that Leo X's power would lead to the weakening of their power in Italy. With the ancient domain of the Church the Pope now held the Romagna, Bologna, and Florence: "...e tanto più quanto per e' progressi di questo papa saranno capacissimi che a lui dispiaccia sommamente la grandezza loro in Italia; e la potenzia sua avendo congiunto al dominio antiquo della Chiesa lo stato di Romagna, di Bologna e di Firenze, è da tenerne conto, e massime venendo el fratello e nipote in opinione di volere attendere alle arme," "Discesa di Francesco I," pp. 116-117.

[29]"Proposta di alleanza," p. 155. Emphasis added. Note Guicciardini's words: "...perché insino che lui non ha rovinato e' viniziani, non ha battuto e' franzesi in Francia, la potenzia di ogni papa, e la tua massime che hai lo stato della Chiesa grandissimo e quello di Firenze, è formidabile...." For Guicciardini's strong statement of the meaning of Medici and Church power in one ruler, cf. "Oratio accusatoria," Scritti autobiografici, p. 219: "Né è buona o vera distinzione dalle cose di Firenze a quelle della Chiesa, perché se tu gli avessi veduto malvolentieri grandi a Firenze, aresti avuto anche per male la grandezza del pontificato; e se tu amavi quella, amavi anche di necessità questa altra, perché erano congiunte e connesse in modo insieme, che non potevano ruinare nell' una che non ruinassino nella altra."

[30]"Discesa di Francesco I," p. 117. Note Guicciardini's own words: "...vincendo etiam Milano e Napoli, si astenessi da toccare la Chiesa; se già per mettere un freno in bocca al papa e diminuirlo assai di forze, non voltassi lo stato di Firenze, parendoli che non sendo cosa ecclesiastica, questo uno modo da battere el papa sanza concitare li altri principi."

fear the Emperor, who pretended that he had title and right to the papal states and to all Italy as well.

Guicciardini claimed that he considered these possibilities only because he was concerned for the papal welfare. Perhaps the Pope realized even more than he did that princes cannot trust one another when their ends conflict and when what is useful to the one harms the other.[31] Clement must have known too that the power of the papacy had already suffered eclipses in the past when the world had greater reverence for the Holy See.[32] Further it is the nature of princes, though they may be free from ambition, to be greatly affected by disdain or the suspicion of others.[33] This was the danger which the whole imperial plan brought to the Pope, who stood to clash with it head-on. He had to consider his methods of meeting the dangers to his position.

To Charles, Clement was too great an obstacle and unquestionably, the Pope had to fear him, especially when it was almost a certainty that Charles would move against him.[34] Guicciardini went so far as to say that perhaps

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[31] "Proposta di alleanza," p. 155. Guicciardini writes: "...non può tra principi essere amore o confidenzia quando e' fini non solo sono diversi, ma quello che è utile all' uno nuoce allo altro."

[32] Storia d'Italia, IV, 268.

[33] "Giustificazione della politica," p. 206.

[34] "Proposta di alleanza," p. 155. Note Guicciardini's expression: "Hai adunche da temere di Cesare perchè e certo che non si provedendo sarà in potestà sua el farti male; ed è quasi certo che to ne farà."

even Charles' personal hatred for Clement inspired his action.[35] Moreover, the somewhat vague prerogatives attaching to the imperial office constituted a real snare for the papacy. The maintenance of good order or the reformation of abuses within the Church called for the cooperation of the emperor.[36]

The emperors advanced the opinion of justices favorable to their cause that they were simply reintegrating into the empire what their predecessors had held.[37] What certainty did Clement have that Charles would be satisfied to restore the empire to its early majesty simply by appropriating papal dominions. He might even attempt to control and dominate the pope and to make him dependent upon the temporal power.[38] Guicciardini feared that Clement would be too slow to see Charles' intentions and that he would be too trusting of him. In view of the Emperor's past record, it would not be prudent for the Pope to trust in his so-called goodness, but it would be inviting danger to his own person, to the See of Peter and to the common good

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[35]"Giustificazione della politica," p. 206. Guicciardini's words are "...con chi forse aveva odio."

[36]"Proposta di alleanza," pp. 154-155. Cf. Guicciardini's words here: "...nella quale provincia tenendo la Chiesa apostolica tanto stato quanto tiene, ed a te essendo aggiunto lo stato di firenze, è troppa parte questa da essere disprezzata da uno che aspiri al tutto; ed in termini pari aresti da temere da ogni principe che avessi tanta opportunità, ma molto più dallo imperadore, el quale non solo in Roma, e nelle altre terre che tiene la Chiesa, ed in Firenze, pretende titolo e ragione, ma sa ancora che lo imperadore ha una certa connessità con la Chiesa, che in uno certo modo gli appartiene pensare alla reformazione e buoni ordini di quella."...

[37]Ibid., p. 155.

[38]"Giustificazione della politica," pp. 206, 203. Note Guicciardini's words: "...deprimendo loro o reducendogli dependenti da sé."

of Italy. Guicciardini put himself in the class of "wise men," who understand that no prince or privato can be judged secure from others when there is any possibility that they can suffer injury.

Guicciardini's pessimism is strongly indicated in his statement that one's insecurity is guaranteed if he depends upon another's good will. Each person uses his free will and can change his mind as often as he desires. All things are as obscure, uncertain and fallacious as the hearts of men are full of dark recesses and labyrinths. Guicciardini seemed to be looking to the brute realities of his own age when he observed that a prince who trusts in others and allows himself to be led is powerless. Such a one retains only the name, garb and accessories of a ruler.[39] Guicciardini advised that a ruler has to act with independence and decision.

After having described the power of Clement and how Charles would seek to destroy it, Guicciardini turned to an examination of the method Charles would use. Taking away but a little papal power would not be enough for him. Charles could begin by taking Florence and continue to weaken the Pope by taking a great part of the papal states.[40] This done, Charles would have no

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39"Giustificazione della politica," p. 206. Guicciardini's actual words are significant: "Di poi che cosa piú oscura, piú incerta, piu fallace che e' cuori delli uomini pieni di infinite latebre e laberinti....e quando bene ne potessi restare sicurissimo, ciascuno principe che e veduto dependere in tutto dalla discrezione di altri, resta senza riputazione, senza degnitá, senza maestá, piú presto col nome, con l'abito, con gli ornamenti di principe che con la potesta, con la sustanzia ed effetti." Emphasis added. For the importance of reputation in Guicciardini's thought, cf. infra,

40"Proposta di alleanza," p. 156. Guicciardini's words are: "...e ridurti in termine che non abbia per conto nessuno piu da temerti, il che non potrá fare se non ti toglie buona parte dello stato che tiene la Chiesa."

reason to fear Clement. The attack on Florence would be followed by the disarming of the Pope and finally the occupation of Rome. Here, Charles would have to make use of Colonna troops and, very possibly, Clement could be taken as another Colonna had seized and disgraced Boniface VIII.[41]

But there was another way, and Guicciardini informed Clement of it very directly. Before Charles ever passed into Italy or before the Pope could come to make an alliance with the French, the Emperor could reduce Clement to the status of a small insignificant pope. He would simply destroy his position. Here the conciliar theory came into direct play. The Emperor could assert that he, as supreme overlord of all Christendom, was responsible for order in the Church. Through the means of a council, he could attempt to have papal authority cut to nothing. In the end, he would have a pope whom he could manage, a little bishop of Rome, not pope of the universal Church.[42]

Clement knew the infinite particulars of the case better than Guicciardini or anyone else, but Guicciardini feared that this alone would not move him to action. He cautioned the Pope not to be deceived by the protestations of the Emperor. Even if he does not move on the papal states, a possibility Guicciardini always stressed, Charles would try to take from Clement his authority, dignity and majesty. As pope he would be forced to obey all imperial wishes. Guicciardini wrote forcefully:

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[41] Ibid., p. 157. Guicciardini wrote of a possible imperial occupation of Rome: "...questo sarebbe uno grande smembrarti."

[42] Ibid., p. 156. For a discussion of the conciliarism under Julius II, cf. supra, pp. 103-106. For the suggestions regarding a church council under Clement VII, cf. infra, pp. 153-159.

...che è quello grado che e' savi dicono che uno principe debbe fuggire quanto la morte, perché quando è condotto qui, è principe in nome, ma in fatto è ogni altra cosa che principe; ed a chi è uso a dominare, el mondo ed essere stimato ed ambito da grandissimi príncipi, e quello che è solito a dare el moto alle cose, come eri tu a tempo di Lione, e come da uno tempo in qua sone stati gli antecessori tuoi, io non so quanto sia minore male che la morte e la perdita degli stati; el ridursi in condizione tale.[43]

The world of the latter 1520's was a world of hard reality. One had to preserve one's authority. Guicciardini advocated that Pope Clement should take the offensive and meet Charles head on, for there was no other choice but ruin.[44] Of course, this involved other dangers but they had to be risked. Clement's defeat by Charles would be his ruin. Charles would treat him as an enemy. But it was far better to suffer in noble self-defense than to withdraw and not face the issue. At the time of the Emperor's overtures to the Pope, Guicciardini advised him to run the risk of the greater evil with the hope of final liberty.[45]

In later years, when Guicciardini attempted to justify Clement's leadership of the League of Cognac and his anti-imperial ventures, he used similar arguments. It is incorrect to assume that Clement's decision to undertake war against Charles was imprudent because it failed and resulted in the sack of Rome, the Pope's imprisonment and other calamities. He argued that whoever wants to condemn the Pope of rash action must, if he does not wish

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[43] Ibid., p. 157.

[44] Ibid. Guicciardini concludes: "Ma quomodocunque sit, nessuno non negherà che se non si fa opposizione a questa grandezza, tu hai a temere grandissima ruina...."

[45] Ibid., p. 158.

to make a snap judgment, diligently examine the reasons which motivated him.[46]

Guicciardini further discussed his basic criteria for entering into any war, first, necessity, and second, facility. One has to be threatened moreover, and has to have good grounds for victory. To begin a war is not to be considered lightly, for all know its risks. So is the case for any prince, and much more is it necessary for a Roman pope to take a good look at the situation. Guicciardini admitted that a pope has the duty to maintain the spiritual welfare of his flock and that the temporal power was given to him only secondarily.[47] It was justifiable for the Pope to take arms to defend the authority of the Holy See, but he admitted he was not too certain when it came to measures aimed at the recovery of the temporal states of the Church. Whether these constituted sufficient justification for war, Guicciardini hesitated. Were this recovery in the interests of the faith, war would be justifiable.[48]

If Clement undertook war for any reason but defense of his position and the Church, and, if there were but little hope of victory, he was condemnable. If he had insufficient forces, he was foolhardy. But none of these statements applied to the present case. At first, Clement saw that the imperial domination would diminish papal authority and that of the Holy See in

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[46]"Giustificazione della politica," p. 198

[47]Ibid., p. 199. Guicciardini's words are important: "...di chi è principale la cura spirituale, né gli e stata data la potestà temporale se non per accessoria e sustentacolo di quella...."

[48]Ibid.

general. At the time Clement delayed making a decision, Guicciardini argued that war was necessary and arms could be taken with some hope of success.[49] Since there existed a widespread realization of the strength of the imperial forces, Guicciardini termed the best possible remedy to be a French alliance with the Pope, the Venetians and the other Italian powers and the Swiss. Of course, danger existed, uncertainty of the end. The imperialists already had a strong hold in Lombardy.

After Pavia there could be no peace without Francis' freedom. This complicated all negotiations to that end. The French, by their half-hearted cooperation in the war, made matters more difficult for the Venetians and the Swiss. Under the circumstances, it seemed wiser for them to defend the few areas they held in the north rather than to attack the strong imperialists in Milan.

Guicciardini was aware of the uncertainties of the remedies he suggested for carrying on the war. He did not know if the allies could hope for continuing Swiss allegiance or whether the Venetians would remain on the allied side. Money was essential for success, and all looked to the papal purse. It was almost a certainty that the first blow of the imperialists would be at the papal states and Florence, not at Venice. Clement had allies but he had, more often than not, to work alone.[50]

It seemed to Guicciardini that lack of money was at the bottom of the Pope's loss of heart. His resources were insufficient for a long war which

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[49] "Giustificazione della politica," pp. 199-200

[50] "Proposta di alleanza," pp. 159-160.

this was likely to be. Guicciardini argued, however, that Clement could have overcome some of his difficulties in the latter months of 1526 and the beginning of 1527 if he had taken advantage of methods of raising money which other popes had been accustomed to take "even for carrying on ambitious and unjust enterprises." The need for money, Guicciardini thought, would have justified the simoniacal creation of cardinals, for the Church itself stood in a most serious state of jeopardy.[51]

Nor did Guicciardini hesitate to make such a suggestion personally to his master. He was certain that Clement would ultimately have to provide the needed funds, even through those methods which he had frowned upon.[52] Then he would have only the blame, not the benefit.[53] Guicciardini wished that the Pope could see the situation as he did and act accordingly. Near the end of August 1526, Guicciardini did not know where to turn for assistance. The signatories of the League of Cognac continued to fail in their obligations, military and monetary. The Lieutenant's frequent requests to the Datario[54] and to Salviati had met with unsatisfactory responses, and he

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[51] Storia d'Italia, V, 60, 971.

[52] Letter to Clement VII, August 21, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 163-164. Note Guicciardini's frank words: "Et se li assegnamenti suoi ordinari gli mancano, credo che la consideri che la è necessitato o provedervi extraordinariamente o deponere le arme. Et questo secondo ha in se tanti male, che e mali del primo sono piccola cosa a comparatione di questo....Però è necessario che la deliberi, et sanza dilatione dia principio a quelle provisione che sono manco contro alla mente sua....Insomma io veggo tante difficultà nel deponere le arme con modo ragionevole et sicuro, che io sono certo che la necessità condurra Vostra Sanctità a provedere de danari, etiam con quelli modi che hora gli dispiacciono...."

[53] Storia d'Italia, V, 136.

[54] The Datario was the papal bursar.

was greatly concerned. Everything would collapse if money were not quickly forthcoming. Expenses in camp were great and they were rendered greater because of King Francis' failure to contribute. Guicciardini reminded His Holiness that soldiers were not paid "with designs in air." Above all, it was necessary to have the money in time lest, to all the other disorders, another would be added, that of having provided too late.[55] There was no time to quibble in so vital a concern, for upon cold cash depended the preservation of the Holy See, Clement's own safety, the welfare of Florence and that of all Italy.[56]

While Guicciardini understood the many papal problems in 1526 and 1526, he continued to be highly critical because Clement did not seem to be able to help himself. Not only did he wish to avoid any simoniacal dealings, when there were many persons who were willing to pay huge sums for ecclesiastical titles, but also the Pope let everyone know of his poverty and fear. Thus the boldness and hopes of those who sought to attack him increased.

In Guicciardini's judgment, the Pope's actions indicated his inconstancy.

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[55] Letter to Clement VII, August 21, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 163-164. Guicciardini concluded: "Ma la prudentia sua bisogna che consista in questo: di farlo in tempo che gli giovi; et non tardare tanto che, oltre alli altri disordini, si aggiunga ancora questo: di havere provisto doppo el tempo."

[56] Ibid. Note Guicciardini's lofty words: "Et la prego quanto posso che, per conservatione della Sedia Apostolica et sua, per beneficio della sua patria et per la salute di tucta Italia, non vadia più differendo el risolversi a fare grossa provisione di danari, perchè altrimente non ci è rimedio...." Florence was "sua patria."

He had not even entered the war with "a suitable and firm resolution."[57] Not only was the territory and position of the Church endangered as a result of Clement's irresolution but also the Florentine state and the Pope's own influence.[58] But, if he moved fast, he might even yet get the Venetians to cooperate with him. Milan was already lost and so was Alfonso of Ferrara.

Guicciardini saw that the next papal move hinged to a great extent on that of France. He could only hope that Clement could defend himself while the French were making up their minds, and maintain the status quo in Florence. If the Pope found it necessary to take the offensive without the French, then he had to act fast.[59] While he was to move only with reason, he ought to realize that desperate cases call for actions that might appear rash but are the best that can be done. In the state of affairs Guicciardini was considering, one simply had to act.[60] To sit around and wait for ruin and death seemed ignominious to him. Guicciardini argued that

> a chi non si aiuta né Dio suole, né la fortuna può aiutare, ma a chi si aiuta Dio ha compassione, e la fortuna amore, e spesso a chi audacemente si getta ne' pericoli, fa succedere, contro a ogni

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[57] Ibid. Note Guicciardini's words: "...il pontefice, il quale non era entrato nella guerra con la costanza dell' animo conveniente...."

[58] "Proposta di alleanza," p. 161. Note Guicciardini's words: "...ti sarà forse mutato sotto lo stato di Firenze."

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., p. 160. Guicciardini's words were well-chosen. The allies faced a desperate situation: "...in tale caso la necessità la stringe a gittarsi a ogni rimedio etiam precipitoso..."

ragione ed ogni speranza, effetti felicissimi.[61]

Guicciardini later discussed the plan of action he had laid out to Clement and which the Pope finally followed. When Francis was taken prisoner, all the rulers of Italy, especially the Pope, were prey to the imperial power. Tension was white hot with the imperial occupation of Milan and the ruin of Sforza. The Emperor put Milan under Bourbon and this created serious difficulty. As an inveterate enemy of Francis, he was completely dedicated to Charles.

That power reached its height with Francis' freedom, for the King yielded his Milanese claims with promises that he would intervene no more in Italian affairs. Charles' agreement with Francis was a clear sign that he wanted control of the peninsula. He knew that his ambitions would be stopped if he had to oppose Italy and France together.[62]

Clement fully realized that the allies could not resist the Emperor if Francis would observe the promises he made to obtain his freedom. It seemed quite likely that the King would league with the Pope and the Venetians and assist the Duke of Milan. Henry VIII continually promised that he too would join the League. Guicciardini asked what was Clement to do when he saw a possibility of victory?[63]

Nevertheless, Clement was tempted to negotiate peace through dealings

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[61] Ibid., p. 161.

[62] "Giustificazione della politica," pp. 200, 203-204, 209. France, under its regent, Louise of Savoy, would go to war for Francis' release if it could be obtained in no other way.

[63] Ibid., pp. 204-208.

with Charles' agents in Rome. He thought he might obtain very favorable terms if Charles came to realize that Francis might impart new life into the League. Then too, Charles' ministers and captains, who had always advised war, now wanted peace. Ugo di Moncada went to Rome to come to some accord with the Pope. He explained that the imperialists might have to abandon Milan for they were in serious straits. The Marchese del Guasto and Antonio di Leva, the most important of the imperial military captains, wrote of their desire for peace to Moncada and to the Duke of Sessa, the imperial ambassador in Rome.[64] Moncada's commission met with little success. Clement saw that less was to be gained by peace at this point than by a just and honorable war to restore the Duchy of Milan to Sforza. Guicciardini explained that all Italy wanted this war, "necessaria alla salute universale."[65]

Guicciardini turned suddenly to a detailed discussion of the papal role vis-à-vis the Emperor in Florence. First, he explained that the Pope did not aspire through this war to occupy the lands of others or to acquire anything for the Church or for his family.[66] But rather he was concerned for Florentine safety. When the Emperor came into Italy, he was disposed either to destroy Florence because of her French inclination or to take away the

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[64] These letters and those of Moncada to Charles en route from Siena were intercepted, ibid., p. 210.

[65] Ibid., pp. 208-210.

[66] Ibid., p. 210.

Signoria.[67] Perhaps his ultimate plan was to make her the camera di imperio![68] At the very least, he would seize Pisa, Livorno, Arezzo and the more important places in Tuscany. Clement's one consideration was to save the patria as far as he could. Since he thought of himself as a Florentine citizen, he found no other expedient than to capitulate to the Emperor at Barcelona, but with the promise that there be no change in the city's administration. It was to have free government with liberty for all Florentines and it was to pose no threat to the Pope or to the French King.[69] In 1530 Guicciardini agreed that, whatever the plans of Clement and Charles for Florence, it could only yield to the Empire as the other allies had done.[70]

In the Storia d'Italia Guicciardini took a somewhat different position on Clement and Florence from that taken in his earlier political tracts. He emphasized rather that the Pope's dealings with the Emperor at Bologna in 1529 and 1530 were prompted more by his long-favored and hidden project of reinstating the Medici in Florence than by his desire for her security.[71] In

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[67]The executive and legislative government by the priors, known collectively as the Signoria, dated from the constitutional reforms of the late thirteenth century, Hyett, pp. 46-47.

[68]Guicciardini thought that the central location of Italy might influence the Emperor to make it the center of imperial government rather than Spain or Germany.

[69]"Ragioni che consigliano la signoria di Firenze ad accordarsi, con Clemente VII," Scritti politici, pp. 214-215.

[70]Ibid., pp. 217-219.

[71]Storia d'Italia, V, 215-216.

Guicciardini's judgment, Clement's negotiations with Charles at this point seemed more sincere than his promises to the allies. He observed that the two highest powers of Christendom "treated more about private concerns... than about the universal business of peace."[72] Guicciardini argued that Clement, though realising the danger of Charles' power, felt that he could be more easily induced than King Francis to restore the Medici to Florentine rule.[73] Nor did he fail to criticize the Pope for allowing punishments of republicans in Florence after her surrender. In fact, Guicciardini placed the blame squarely on Clement's shoulders: this "was the intention of the Pope though manifested to few."[74]

Still another side of Clement's reign remains to be discussed. This is Clement's policy toward the summoning of a Church council which was to handle Church reform and the method of reestablishing peace among Christians.

In a study of papal policy, the Pope's efforts for Church reform cannot be omitted. Though Leo X did nothing to further the reform sentiment so explicitly demanded in the Lateran Council, Clement's policy was even more cautious. It was strengthened by the doubts or open resistance of many cardinals who were aware of the political difficulties it would create. The

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[72] Ibid., 243-244.

[73] Ibid., 249.

[74] Ibid., 299. At the time, however, Guicciardini defended these harsh recriminations as necessary for the consolidation of the state. Cf. infra, p.

European monarchs could use the issue of reform to cut down the Pope's position. The majority of the Sacred College and the curialists looked upon the conciliar reformers with suspicion and fear.[75]

Talk of peace, amidst the din of war, was linked closely with the problem of a council to treat of Church reform. Both Pope and Emperor claimed a vital role in the preservation of unity and order in Christendom. Clement reiterated his claim that as pope he had the duty to work for peace, a fact which hindered him from showing favoritism to any ruler. He argued publicly that it was his duty to compose quarrels among the princes and not to create them. And a council might raise more problems than it would solve.[76]

In February 1526, Charles and Francis agreed to request the Pope to give public notice, as soon as possible, of a general council to treat of peace among Christians.[77] The problem was that war not only wracked Christendom and split it up the middle, with Italy as the target and the papal states and Rome the heart, but that peace among Christians involved serious theological issues. One centered on the Lutherans, already gone from the fold, and the other meant a political invasion into the powers of the sacerdotium.

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[75] Archbishop John Fisher of Rochester warned that the time for reconciliation with the heretics had passed and that a summons to a council now would be tantamount to a concession toward those who had neither the will nor the intention to abandon their errors, Douglas, p. 38.

[76] Storia d'Italia, IV, 240-249, especially 244-245.

[77] The rulers wanted to organize a campaign against infidels and heretics and have the Pope grant a general Crusade for three years, ibid., 350.

One can only recall that the struggles of Pope Clement were based on the age-old conflict of *sacerdotium versus regnum*.

Clement repeatedly answered the demands for a general council to treat of peace and reform. He apologized for his inability to lead the Christian princes to compose their quarrels and to undertake an expedition against the powerful and advancing Turks. Just as Pope Leo had made a motion for consultations to be held among the princes for a war against the powerful Selim and his horde,[78] so also Clement was concerned that the Turks would try to secure the whole Kingdom of Hungary to the detriment of *tutta la Cristianita*. He did what he could to stop their march. The Pope explained that he had continually exhorted the Christian leaders to make peace among themselves to form a united front against threats from outside. Amidst so many other weighty concerns, he gave monetary assistance to Hungary for defense against the Turks.

The Pope said he went to war against his will, Guicciardini related, because of his alliance with the League. There was no peace for the Holy See in Italy. Clement observed that God wished that the head of Christendom be wounded, perhaps for some good end. He tried to look to the common welfare while the temporal heads of Christendom were distracted by concerns not conducive to the Christian commonweal.

Whenever there would be a suspension of arms in Italy, Clement promised that he would meet with the Christian princes and obtain a universal peace among Christians by prayer or persuasion. He begged the Cardinals to assist him in his *santa opera*.[79]

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[78] *Ibid.*, 42.

[79] *Ibid.*, V, 76-78.

The imperial victory and the accord between Charles and Clement at Barcelona led to more specific plans against the heretics. The Pope agreed to use spiritual remedies to bring heretics back to the faith while Charles and his brother Ferdinand would cooperate in any way they could. Charles and his brother would use their military strength against the heretics if they remained obstinate while Clement would see to it that the other Christian princes would give military assistance too.[80]

So was religion even secondary to exigencies of papal policies, of papal rule, and, fundamentally, of papal existence itself. Peace among Christians, spiritual unity within one fold, war against infidels, reform of ecclesiastical abuses—these were the issues which made continual calls for a general council inevitable. In 1530 the Emperor intensified the requests for a council which he had made earlier at Bologna. He wished to satisfy the demands which had arisen all over Germany, and it was conducive to his own affairs there to suppress all opportunities for a display of the "tumultuous and refractory disposition of the people."[81]

The Emperor well understood that Clement feared a council and its possible ramifications. He promised that, to remove all apprehensions of danger to papal authority, he would be present at the meeting to take particular care of Clement. Nothing was more displeasing to the Pope, but he did not want to anger Charles. Nor did he think the promises of the Emperor sufficient for his own security. Clement feared that a council might even

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[80] Ibid., 260.

[81] Ibid., 301.

remove him from the papal chair in favor of another candidate. In Guicciardini's judgment, Clement realized that he had stirred up animosity in his own country by his involvement in the miseries of war, and that council members would not judge this in his favor. They would further tend to consider his activities in Florence as aimed only to satisfy the ambitions of his family. At least Clement's opponents would use these arguments to suit their own purposes.

Clement told the cardinals who were to discuss a council how he abhorred it. The Pope explained that Christendom was torn by disputes in 1530 and it was unwise to involve it in the further dissension of a council. To satisfy Charles, however, Clement mentioned that he would agree to the convocation of a general council, provided that it would be held in Italy and that Charles would be present. Moreover, the Lutherans and other heretics were to be informed that they should abide by the group's decisions and, in the meantime, show by their actions that they intended to return to their obedience to the Holy See.

In Guicciardini's judgment, the insistence that the Lutherans conform to Catholic Christianity obstructed any possible progress. They could not be induced to forsake their doctrines and rites before a council, and it was commonly believed that they opposed such a meeting for they felt it would merely reject their opinions. Already former councils had condemned them as heretical. Still, many Lutherans cleverly called for such a meeting. They felt quite certain that the Pope would not grant their request and they could

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bolster up their own authority among the people by explaining that the Pope was afraid to face the issue of their beliefs squarely.[82] Papal policy was in difficult straits, for the Church's attitude toward reform would be construed from Clement's answer.

At Bologna in 1532, a council again was discussed when Charles insisted that Clement issue a call immediately. The Pope answered that the time did not seem ripe, for the French and English kings were not willing to cooperate. And, if a meeting were held without them, nothing would be accomplished. Such a council could even give occasion for a schism.[83]

Guicciardini continually stressed the fact that Clement opposed the council for the "old reasons."[84] He advised the Pope always along the same lines, namely, that the easiest way for the imperium to abase the Pope was by means of a council. Many saw this, however, as the only method of coping with the Lutherans.[85] But the papal position was Guicciardini's primary concern. Nothing could overturn it like a council:

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[82] Ibid., 301-302.

[83] Ibid., 310-311. Henry VIII's agents had already informed Clement that they would take their king's cause from him to a Council. Francis thought Henry had gone too far., ibid, 315.

[84] Ibid., 308.

[85] "Giustificazione della politica," p. 206. Guicciardini stated that Charles could depress the Pope "per via di concili desiderati e ricercati da molti come necessari per la eresia di Luther che ogni dí ampliava, e per molti disordini che sono nella Chiesa."

> La facilitá che ha di farlo è grande, perché oltre alle provincie che lui comanda, sai che per el malo concetto in che è el clero apresso a' laici, la Germania non desidera altro, e la Italia vi sarà pronta; e questo modo, lotre a che può parere iustificato, perché si fara con colore di ragione, puo anche parere iusto allo imperadore, presupponendosi lui la reformagione del clero la quale poi seguiterebbe o no, secondo che Dio volessi.[86]

Of course, Guicciardini could not predict the course of divine actions, but considering matters, he was quite certain. If it were in the Emperor's power to depress the Pope, he would make use of the occasion "either out of ambition, which is natural to emperors against popes, for his own security or even for revenge."[87] The desire to bring the popes to ruin was not lacking in the minds of any of the great princes of Christendom. Even Francis of France knew that no pope could be ruined unless he lost his spiritual power. Yet not even a remote argument could be made by any one prince without the agreement of the other princes of Christendom.[88]

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[86] "Proposta di alleanza," Scritti politici, p. 156.

[87] Storia d'Italia, IV, 325.

[88] In this case, the French ruler would need the acquescence of the Empire and of Spain: "Né si può battere, o a dire meglio, disfare interamente el papa, non gli togliendo lo spirituale; e questo non si può torgli sanza el concorso della Magna e di Spagna, a quali non è a proposito che Francia si faccia capo ed autore di una tanta cosa; e pero saria facile cosa...." "Discesa di Francesco I," p. 117. Moreover there seemed to be an invisible hand preventing the materialization of these plans of ruining the Pope in the spiritual sphere as a step to his political impotence. Guicciardini indicated that it always seemed wiser for Christian rulers to have the Pope's friendship, rather than his animosity. Note his words: "Ma questo ha anche el contrapeso, perché ogni volta che non fussi risoluto a non manomettere el papa nel dominio ecclesiastico, parrebbe piú prudenzia cercare di beneficarlo e farselo amico e confidente, in che non li mancherebbano e' modo; che volerlo per inimico....." ibid., pp. 117-118.

Clement VII died without any diminution of his spiritual authority. Yet, as a Cinquecento prince, he suffered some of the severest defeats any prince ever experienced. True, the Medici line continued to rule in Florence, but his family's fortunes should not have constituted one of the Pope's fundamental concerns. Perhaps from the Storia d'Italia one can see that firm leadership on the part of Clement and solid cooperation on the part of the allies of Cognac would have saved Italy. In any event, with his defeat, Italian politics as a deciding factor came to an end, so well exemplified in his humiliating peace with Charles V.

Guicciardini's position in the service of the Pope and the League associated him with their few successes as well as their ultimate failure. His political account of what happened in the war against Charles was in great measure an apology for himself as well as Clement. Guicciardini admitted that his own miseries came from his deliberate decision to advise war from which all these evils came, "tanta ruina!"[89] Yet, as politicians who fail do today, he cautioned that none should complain against the savi. He apparently placed himself in this category of wise men, who however saw all along that the Pope's timid and irresolute policy destroyed the possibility of success.[90]

Yet the opportunity for papal victory seemed very promising.[91] Weaknesses were evident within imperial ranks. There were insufficient forces; there

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[89] "Consolatoria," Scritti autobiografici, p. 166.

[90] Ibid., pp. 177, 176.

[91] Ibid., p. 177. Many considerations force one to confess, Guicciardini noted, that "...che rare volte fu per alcuno principe presa impresa ne' si giusta né si necessaria, né con maggiore speranza della vittoria."

was a lack of money; there was the enmity of the Milanese populace. The Pope also had with him the French King, the Venetians, and even the vague sympathy of the English King. Unfortunately, Francis did not consult any of the allies on his policies and never helped the League.[92]

He spoke of Pope Clement as "that poor and wretched prince who had so unhappily become a prisoner of the Spaniards." "Tutto el mondo" was affected by their unfortunate ascendancy in Italy.[93] Too late had the Pope come to realize what Guicciardini and other prudent persons had stressed, namely, that money would have contributed significantly to the insurance at least of papal and Roman safety. Only a few days before Bourbon entered the city, Clement created three cardinals for a fee, which, because of the lack of time, could not even be paid then![94] The vagaries of the princely role of the popes from Innocent and Alexander through Clement culminated in this historic tragedy.

At his death, Pope Clement left an abundance of jewels in the Castel Sant' Angelo and several officials in the papal court, but a very small quantity of money. Guicciardini wrote:

> For what happiness can compare with the unhappiness of his imprisonment, his having witnessed the sack of Rome with such horrible ravages, and his having been the cause of so great a ruin to his own country? He died hated by the court, suspected by the princes, and with the character of being rather of a morose and disagreeable than of a pleasant and affable temper, for he was reputed avaricious, hardly to be trusted and naturally averse from doing a kindness.[95]

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[92] Ibid., pp. 176-177.

[93] Ibid., p. 166.

[94] Storia d'Italia, V. 136.

[95] Ibid., 317-318.

Guicciardini's words evidenced the pessimism that worked through the entire Storia and the pity and shame surrounding the ruler to whom he had devoted a significant part of his active life. He acknowledged that Clement merited praise instead for having taken up arms through necessity and not ambition to preserve his person, the Holy See, the whole of Italy and the world.[96] But especially poignant was the tragedy of Guicciardini himself, though an "accidente," something to him far deeper than that of his master.[97]

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[96]"Sua Sanctità sarà laudata se havendo prese l'arme per necessità et non per ambitione, farà ogni cosa per non rovinare sé, quella Sede, Italia tucta et el mondo; anzi, non lo faccendo, sarà bestemmiata da ognuno," letter to Giammatteo Giberti, August 22, 1526, Carteggi, IX, 175.

[97]"Consolatoria," Scritti autobiografici, p. 166.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS

In the Storie fiorentine, Guicciardini studied the history of Florence from the uprising of the Ciompi[1] in 1378 to 1509. He thought that an accurate knowledge of past happenings would help him better to understand the contemporary Florentine situation. These early researches into Florentine history formed the factual basis for Guicciardini's political thought.

He recognized that Florence had been split by factions throughout her history and that the often fierce struggle among them prevented the establishment of a stable government there. Guicciardini held that Medici ascendancy in Florence was the almost inevitable result of the city's long history of civil discord, but this instability further produced the theocracy of Savonarola and the republic of Soderini.[2] There is a recurrent theme in all Guicciardini's Florentine writings, the decadence and final fall of Florence

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[1]The Ciompi were of the lower classes of Florence who revolted in 1378 for social, economic and political grievances. Democracy in Florence reached its zenith immediately after the uprising and then continued steadily to wane, except for a short-lived revival in the days of Savonarola, until it disappeared completely under the later Medici rulers, Hyett, pp. 188-196.

[2]These points form the whole ideological current of Guicciardini's Storie fiorentine dal 1378 al 1509.

and of Italy.[3]

Machiavelli too studied Florence's past and in his Istorie fiorentine[4] placed its events within the larger scope of Italian affairs. Machiavelli judged them in the light of his ideal, the Roman Republic. His Istorie incorporates some of his favorite ideas, namely, the constitutional cycle,[5] the vitalizing effects of party struggles on civic life, and the amoral character of successful political action. It reflects a mood of pessimism, even an almost tragic despair. He continually reflected upon the reason that his own city did not come up to the standard which Rome had set, a free republic of virtuous citizens striving for fame and glory in the service of their government. In Florentine history Machiavelli found continually in operation struggles based upon private ambition, egoism and a thirst for personal power. His own experiences as Secretary of the Republic had given him a first-hand opportunity to observe these vices at work.[6]

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[3]Passerin d'Entrèves, pp. 160-161.

[4]In his history Machiavelli included events from the barbarian invasions in Italy and concluded it with the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

[5]Machiavelli, like Polybius, believed that not only does human history tend to repeat itself but also that in all states action and reaction alternate. Out of prosperity comes decay and out of dissolution rebirth. Monarchy, the first form of government in most states, becomes tyrannical and is succeeded by an oligarchy, a democracy and finally anarchy, a condition which makes for a reversion to monarchy. Machiavelli noted that the cycle is only rarely completed. Cf. J.S. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (New York, 1960), pp. 455-456.

[6]Felix Gilbert, Introduction to the Torchbook Edition of Niccolò Machiavelli, History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy (New York, 1960), pp. xvi, xvii.

Both political giants of the Cinquecento tried to understand the problems of Florence and realized that they were but a part of the problems that beset Italy. They knew that both these situations were intimately related. Guicciardini explained in his Le cose fiorentine[7] that in 1375 the city was free and self-governing but, from that period onward, it fell under the perpetual unhappiness "a non essere mai caduta in uno governo bene ordinato, di essere stata sempre piena di sedizione civile."[8] In addition to these major internal struggles the city faced, there was the external invasion of 1494, for Guicciardini the beginning of Italian ruin. Perhaps that was the reason for the termination of his Le cose with that year.

But Guicciardini and Machiavelli differed on the remedies each proposed for solution of the Italian illness. Guicciardini saw no value in the government of the Roman Republic as a model for that of Florence. To him, it was unwise to praise the defects of a government which were the cause of disorder.[9] Guicciardini valued the benefits accruing to Italy from her strong

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[7]Le cose fiorentine was begun at Finocchietto at the end of 1527, abandoned in September 1529, taken to Lucca in March 1530, then to Rome and Florence until Guicciardini was nominated governor of Bologna in July 1531. He carried it to Florence in 1534 for certain corrections and then abandoned it. Of the four books in Le cose, the last two are incomplete, Ramat, pp. 64-65.

[8]Cited in ibid., p. 65.

[9]"Considerazioni intorno ai Discorsi del Machiavelli sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio," Book I, Chap. 6, Scritti politici, pp. 13-14.

municipalities while Machiavelli stressed the necessity of strong monarchical unity. Guicciardini agreed papal power had been one of the chief factors in keeping Italy disunited and that the conservative function of the Church in Italian history had hindered the formation of a monarchy similar to that of Spain, France or England. But Guicciardini could not understand the value of Machiavelli's point that Italy might well be saved by becoming a national state. To him, whether this would be a good or a bad thing for his country was debatable. The monarchy which Machiavelli so desired Guicciardini seems to have contemplated with fear.[10]

The Italian states, Guicciardini believed, had perhaps suffered more than they would have if united. On the other hand, the establishment of a central government in one city would have depressed all the others, and Italy would not have developed so many flourishing cities as she had. For this reason, it seemed more likely that union would have been a misfortune rather than a benefit.[11]

While Guicciardini did not have what might be termed a "national conscience" and remained through his entire life a citizen of Florence, his political acumen enabled him to see that the interests of his republic could

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[10]Note Guicciardini's words: "...doppo tanti naufragi delle cose di Italia e poi che questi príncipi aranno combattuto assai, para ragionevole che in qualcuno sia per rimanere potenzia grande, el quale cerchera di battere e' minori e forse ridurre Italia in uno monarchia," "Del modo di ordinare il governo popolare," Discorsi del reggimento di Firenze, p. 218.

[11]"Considerazioni," Book I, Chap. 12, pp. 22-23. This is a fragmentary work, consisting in a series of observations on various chapters of the Livian Books of Machiavelli. Cf. also J.W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (New York, 1960), pp. 497-500.

not be promoted unless they were considered within the total complex picture of Italian interests.[12] His vista was even greater, for his sojourn at the Spanish court had enabled him to view the immense panorama of international life as it was then forming.

The forms of government in Cinquecento Italy compelled the attention of both Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Machiavelli on the one hand described the strong rule of a prince[13] and, on the other, popular control of government. In the Discorsi, he upheld government by the majority. It seemed logical and just and afforded possibilities for order and benefits to the state.[14]

Guicciardini found neither of Machiavelli's political plans wise or feasible. He was particularly opposed to the plan outlined in the Discorsi. Absolutely no stability could be looked for in the people. In the mouth of one Barbadoro he put these words, supposedly delivered to his fellow-citizens: You carry "nel cuore el desiderio della libertà, non per altro che per tormento vestro, poiché non siate capaci né a cognoscerla ne a usarla."[15] The people know as much of the motives or even the acts of their government as they do of events in India.[16] To speak of the people means to speak of a mad

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[12]Palmarocchi, Studi Guicciardiniani, p. 88.

[13]This is the subject of his most well-known work, Il principe.

[14]Allen, p. 498.

[15]Le cose fiorentine, ed. Roberto Ridolfi (Firenze, 1945), Book II, p. 81.

[16]Ricordi, II, 141.

beast, without taste, discernment or stability.[17] Experience demonstrates that rarely does anything happen that the multitude expects,[18] for they are usually more pleased by specious than mature counsels.[19] According to Guicciardini, ordinary citizens were unable to perceive the proper end and the means of reaching it. He pointed practically to the chaos and extreme peril to which the Ciompi had conducted the city.[20]

In fact Florentine civil life seemed so warily based to Guicciardini that it was easily disposed to fall into either tyranny or popular dissolution.[21] Until the ottimati, men of quality in whom lay the best hope for stability within the state, were brought into the city's political affairs, Florence could scarcely hope for a stable government. His cooperation with wily tyrannical rulers, in his later years, stemmed primarily from a desire to take advantage of a possible opportunity to inaugurate his own governmental plan.[22] Actually, constitutional reform was a sine qua non to enable Florence

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[17] Ibid., 140. Guicciardini's words are strong and bitter: "Chi disse uno popolo disse veramente uno animale pazzo, pieno di mille errori, di mille confusione, senza gusto, senza deletto, senza stabilità."

[18] Storia d'Italia, II, 45.

[19] Ibid., IV, 277.

[20] "Cose fiorentine," Book II, pp. 72-74. Cf. also "La decima scalata," Discorsi, pp. 215-216.

[21] "Il governo popolare," ibid., p. 219.

[22] Agostino Rossi, Francesco Guicciardini e il governo fiorentino dal 1527 al 1540, (Bologna, 1896-99), I, 104. Rossi finds the Florentine situation in 1530 his basic reason for attempting to make a practical application of his theory. At this time, Medici domination became inevitable; therefore, Guicciardini favored making their regime stable by providing capable and experienced citizens to participate in the government, ibid., 211.

to cope not only with her own internal problems but also with the larger political organisms of the sixteenth century which were engaging in power politics.[23]

The most satisfactory control of Florentine problems was demonstrated by Lorenzo the Magnificent. Guicciardini's estimate of Lorenzo the man was, like that of Savonarola, intimately linked with his rule of Florence. Although he was a man of virtue, there were in him some vices which Guicciardini judged to be "parte naturali, parte necessari." Because of his great authority, Florence was free in name only. Nevertheless, it was a great city,[24] and could not have had a better and more peaceable tyrant.[25] In the twenty-three year history of his rule, there were no showy military victories and no clever strategems to delight the public. Yet even his adversaries agreed that it took a capable person to rule a faction-ridden city like Florence and at the same time increase his power and glory.[26]

Guicciardini defended Lorenzo from accusations of harshness, especially

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[23]The countless events operative in Cinquecento power politics and the allied "balance of power" concept have been described, on the basis of Guicciardini's analytic account, in supra, Chapters II-V. A concise definition and explanation of the new concept of "equilibrium" or "balance of power" is given by Walter Maturi, "Equilibrio politico," Enciclopedia italiana (Roma, 1932), XIV, 162. He points out that "equilibrium" was born in fifteenth-century Italy and extended to the rest of the European continent. It aimed first to equalize the forces of the greater powers in such a way that the political balance would not swing to the favor of any one of them and, secondly, to impede the formation of a universal empire.

[24]Storie fiorentine, pp. 73-74.

[25]Ibid., p. 80.

[26]Ibid., p. 74.

in the notorious Pazzi affair.[27] It was not an easy task to rule a city where matters had to be conducted under republican forms. This necessity helped to make Lorenzo somewhat defiant and suspicious and at times led him to act firmly.[28] Moreover, the Pazzi conspiracy obviously provided motives for the cruel actions with which Lorenzo was charged.[29]

To Guicciardini the Pazzi affair was indeed fateful for Lorenzo's future. It constituted a danger both to his state and to his life, but ultimately it afforded him "great reputation and utility." He was recognized as patron of the city and in a manner as lord of the state:

> che in futurum rimase liberamente ed interamente arbitro e quasi signore della città, e quella potenzia che insino a quello di era stata in lui grande ma sospettosa, diventò grandissima e sicura.

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[27]The Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478 was engineered by Girolamo Riario, the lord of Imola, and Francesco Pazzi, a member of the well-known banking family in competition with the Medici, with the assistance of Archbishop Francesco Salviati. They planned to murder Lorenzo and Giuliano de'Medici and to overthrow their government. Giuliano was assassinated and Lorenzo narrowly escaped death. Sixtus IV, allied with Ferrante of Naples, and from 1474 on ill terms with Lorenzo, excommunicated him and placed Florence under interdict. Venice and Milan, Lorenzo's allies, aided him in the subsequent military conflict. In 1480 the war of Florence with Naples and the papacy ended. The Turkish appearance in the south influenced Sixtus to remove his ecclesiastical censures. Schevill, The Medici (New York, 1960), pp. 123-136, and Florence, pp. 382-386. Cf. also Cecilia M. Ady, Lorenzo dei Medici and Renaissance Italy (London, 1955), Chap. 8.

[28]Storie fiorentine, p. 78. Guicciardini noted, however, that every time the course of Cosimo and Lorenzo tended to reduce matters to blood and further violence, as at Perugia and Bologna, at Florence, given the conditions of the city and the nature of the state, they rather helped to destroy than to increase their greatness. Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze, p. 25.

[29]Ibid., p. 78.

> E questo è il fine delle divisione e discordie civile: lo esterminio di una parte; el capo dell' altra diventa signore della città; e' fautori ed aderenti sua, di compagni quasi sudditi; el popolo e lo universale ne rimane schiavo....[30]

Guicciardini intimated his view that Lorenzo, by putting an end to the Florentine curse of factions, accomplished a great benefit. In the Storie fiorentine, he displayed an enthusiasm not to be found in the Storia d'Italia, after his days of diplomacy and disillusionment, save in rare cases like his references to Lorenzo.[31]

His most solid and valuable contributions to Florentine life, like those of Cosimo, resulted from his prudence in consulting his council. Their type of tyranny, was not cruel or rapacious but instead very mild. Since they were desirous of increasing the city's power, they performed many good deeds and few evil ones except those to which necessity had induced them. The early Medici wished to control the government with as much civility as they could.[32]

Lorenzo served not only Florence but the entire peninsula. He acted as an able mediator in the strife brought about by the ambitious and scheming Italian princes. Florence was "di fuori in somma gloria e riputazione" through his skillful manipulation of situations fraught with potential danger for the entire Italian scene.[33]

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[30] Cf. ibid., Chap. 4, esp. p. 38.

[31] Cf. Storia d'Italia, I, 2-3, 5-7.

[32] Dialogo, p. 25.

[33] Florence's lofty position and reputation stemmed, according to Guicciardini's description, "per avere un governo ed un capo di grandissima autorità, per avere frescamente ampliato lo imperio, per essere stata in gran parte cause della salute di Ferrara e poi del re Ferrando, per disporre di Innocenzio interamente, per essere collegata con Napoli e con Milano, per

Guicciardini intimated that Lorenzo's death was a turning point in the history of Florence and of Italy. Here was his hint of tragedy, inevitable since it seemed to be in things. Referring to the succession of the wise Lorenzo by his inept son Piero, Guicciardini explained that "vanne lo stato per eredità e spesse volte di uno savio viene in uno pazzo, che poi da l'ultimo tuffo alla città."[34] While Lorenzo's position strengthened after the Pazzi war and the creation of the Consiglio di settanta,[35] the foundation of Medici power in the cittadini dello stato remained substantially the same and continued after his death.[36] Piero does not seem to have appreciated this fully. His cavalier treatment of the leading ottimati and his increasing reliance on Medici clients[37] may have sprung from a mistaken belief that the

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essere quasi una bilancia di tutta Italia," Storie fiorentine, p. 73. Cf. also the reasons for Florence's "potenzia e riputazione grande" in 1516, "Del modo di assicurare lo stato alla casa de' Medici, "Discorsi, p. 269. Cf. ibid., pp, 74-75, for Guicciardini's account of Lorenzo's friendship with the various Italian powers, the Pope, the Turks and the French. This laudatory passage should be compared with one he wrote five years later in 1513, "Elogio" pp. 223-227.

[34] Storie fiorentine, p. 38.

[35] The Consiglio di settanta, authorized by Lorenzo de Medici in 1480 to tighten his control in Florence after the Pazzi War, superseded all existing councils. For efficiency, however, its most essential powers were delegated to two permanent committees, the Otto, entrusted with foreign and military affairs, and a group of twelve, which handled financial and commercial matters, Schevill, Medici, pp. 145-146, and Florence, pp. 396-397.

[36] Rubinstein, pp. 149-150.

[37] Cf. Storie fiorentine, pp. 84-86. Cf. also "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 276.

Medici régime was sufficiently on the way to institutional permanency to allow him to pay less attention to the feelings of his ottimati supporters. The popular rising against Piero in November 1494 was probably successful because a number of these leaders had deserted him.[38]

The fall of the Medici brought into the open many political and personal feuds among both their adherents and their enemies which made civil war possible as soon as Italy would be freed from Charles VIII's army. It was at this juncture that Savonarola intervened with a plea for a more radical constitutional reform. His authority in Florence had been vastly enhanced by the apparent fulfillment of his prophecies regarding the coming of the French. He flattered the Florentines in their hopes that the French king would restore Pisa to them while all Tuscany would come into their possession.[39] In his sermons he predicted that the calamities of the Republic would be turned into prosperity and the increase of dominion. By 1496 he was denouncing terrible judgments on the Court of Rome and the rest of the Italian powers.

His intervention in the internal politics of Florence, at its acme in December 1494, was one of the principal factors leading to the reforms which transformed the foundations of the Florentine constitution by establishing a Gran Consiglio on the Venetian model with the exception of the Doge.[40]

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[38] Rubinstein, pp. 149-150.

[39] Storia d'Italia, I, 258. Guicciardini accented the diplomatic tradition of long-standing which linked Florence and France as well as the importance of Florentine commercial interests in that kingdom, Storie fiorentine, p. 121.

[40] Rubinstein, pp. 154-155, 157.

Guicciardini stressed the ambiguities in the Gran Consiglio and in the electoral reform. Was the council aristocratic or democratic, more in favor of the ottimati or the popolani?

These changes actually led to a temporary waning of ottimati prestige, but by the end of 1495 once again a considerable proportion of the highest offices went to the same families that had held them under the Medici and earlier.[41]

In spite of ottimati acquiescence in the new régime, Guicciardini did not look upon it with total approval. Proper care had been taken to prevent the common people from breeding disturbances, but citizens of the first rank were not sufficiently distinguished from the commoners. Some of the most ignorant people gave advice on vital matters while the supreme magistracy, which determined matters of the utmost importance, was changed monthly. Guicciardini pointed to the confusion thus bred in the government.

Adding to this chaotic state of affairs was the great authority of Savonarola, whose listeners formed a party. As often happens in governments, Guicciardini noted, the common good was less regarded than the depression of the adverse party.[42] Many of the important citizens looked to the monk, "some out of simplicity, some out of ambition and others out of fear." Never-

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[41] Cf. Storie fiorentine, p. 137, where Guicciardini states that in 1508 or 1509, "girando la elezione degli ufici in pochi e strignendosi a un numero di dugento cittadini o pochi piu."

[42] Storia d'Italia, I, 283. Note Guicciardini's perception: "...e per questo essendosi manifestamente divisa la città, l'una parte con l'altra ne' consigli publici si urtava, non si curando gli uomini, come accade nelle città divisi, di impedire il bene comune per sbattere la riputazione degli avversari."

theless "many judicious persons" despised the preacher and his predictions.[43]

However powerful the impact of Savonarola on the internal and foreign policy of Florence between 1494 and 1498, Guicciardini felt that he was only partially responsible for the various changes there. He did not succeed in altering substantially the social structure of Florentine politics or in solving its problems through the reforms of the Gran Consiglio. The thorn of Florentine politics, the position of the ottimati in the state, remained. Ultimately what mattered most were the political traditions and difficulties of a city which, as Guicciardini said later, was already old and set in her ways.[44] Her troubles would continue to be caused "le male condizioni di quella città, nella quale era tra' cittadini non piccola divisione causata dalla forma del governo."[45]

Guicciardini took into account Savonarola's role. At the very time that the monk believed he was well-grounded in his attempts to transform Florence into a well-ordered political state on a solid spiritual foundation, he became the instrument of her conflicting forces. Some of Guicciardini's admired ottimati, but especially the citizens who had belonged to Piero's stato, wished for a curtailment of the government's criminal jurisdiction for the avoidance of wholesale measures against Mediceans.[46] The protection accorded

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[43] Ibid., pp. 258-259.

[44] Dialogo, pp. 81-82.

[45] Storia d'Italia, I, 283.

[46] Storie fiorentine, pp. 107-108.

to Medici partisans by Francesco Valori[47] and Piero Capponi[48] was insufficient for orderliness in Florence. To prevent violence and disorder and to bring about "la pace universale," Savonarola tried to bridle excesses by allowing appeals to the Signoria[49] and took measures to curb ambition. Guicciardini felt this may have been his fundamental motivation for the institution of the Gran Consiglio.[50] In an objective analysis, Guicciardini found it necessary to admit that these measures alone wrought the salvation of Florence and benefitted both the vanquished and the new régime.

For Guicciardini, the political problem of Savonarola became an individual one, a moral one. Was he a great prophet or a great man and was he good or bad?[51] He admitted that the real question was Savonarola's own life. He had some pride and ambition, but a scrutiny of his life indicated not the least vestige of avarice, luxury or any other weakness or passion. Instead he

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[47]Francesco Valori, elected gonfaloniere in 1497, was an energetic piagnoni statesman devoted to Savonarola, Schevill, Florence, pp. 449-450.

[48]Piero Capponi, a member of one of Florence's families, is noted for his obstinate display of resistance to Charles VIII when he entered Florence in 1494, ibid, pp. 437-438.

[49]By a law due to Savonarolan initiative, all those who were politically condemned acquired the right to appeal to the Signoria, which could render a definitive arrest only after the passage of forty days from the initial judgment. This gave popular passions time to calm themselves and ultimately resulted in the safety of most of the accused, Geffroy, "Un politique italien," p. 969, n. 1.

[50]Storie fiorentine, p. 159.

[51]Ramat, pp. 15-16.

led a truly religious life, full of charity, prayer and observance.[52] There was never so much religion and virtue in Florence as during his lifetime. It decreased so significantly after his death that it became evident that "the good of his time had been created and sustained only by him."[53] He explained that it was not out of place to speak at length of his ignominious death, since it was comparatively rare in his times to see a religious in whom there were so many virtues and so much authority.[54]

In spite of the monk's trial, excommunication and death, many did not cease to believe that he had been sent by God. Guicciardini did not know whether to believe this himself at the time he wrote his Storie fiorentine, but he felt certain that time would clear the doubt. Temporarily he concluded that Savonarola had been sincere, a great prophet and a very great man. Even were it proven that he had been a "dissembling knave," the independence of his spirit and his capability for deceiving so many persons for so many years alone would lead one to admit that he had possessed intelligence, genius and an extraordinary profundity.[55]

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[52]Guicciardini's language is metaphorically clever: "...non nelle corteccie ma nella medolla del culto divino," ibid., p. 157.

[53]Ibid., pp. 156-158.

[54]Guicciardini's deep admiration for Savonarola can best be gleaned from a sample of his descriptive language: "...nella età nostra, ne anche e' nostri padri ed avoli non viddono mai uno religioso sì bene instrutto di molte virtù ne con tanto credito ed autorità quanto fu in lui," Storie fiorentine, p. 156.

[55]Note Guicciardini's telling statement: "Io ne sono dubio e non ci ho opinione risoluta in parte alcuna, e mi riservo, se viverò tanto, al tempo che chiarirà el tutto; ma bene concludo questo, che se lui fu buono, abbiano veduto o' tempi nostri uno grande profeta; se fu cattivo, uno uomo grandissimo, perchè, oltre alle lettere, se seppe simulare sì publicamente tanti anni una tanta cosa sanza essere mai scoperto in una falsità, bisogna confessare che avessi uno giudizio, uno ingegno ed una invenzione profondissima," ibid.

His estimate of Savonarola in the Storia d'Italia of some years later is more coldly factual and, in fact, almost non-existent. Though he wrote that "Divine authority was made to appear in the counsels of men" in the mouth of this monk, he spoke mainly of his troubles with the Pope. He did not consider here his significant contributions to the internal peace of Florence or to the reform of men's manner of living. Though Savonarola died with constancy, one must remain unable to pronounce on his innocence or his guilt.[56] The effect that the experiences of Guicciardini's active years had on his judgment is apparent in his portrait of the monk. By the time he wrote his major work, he was aware that Cinquecento Italy called for more than the idealism of a Savonarola.

A realistic political thinker like Guicciardini found it valuable to compare recent periods of peninsular history. In the time of the gonfaloniere Soderini, whose republic succeeded the Savonarolan regime, he explained that the city of Florence was much more stable than it was in 1527 and that the affairs of Italy too were more settled and secure. To his laudatory estimate of Soderini and his virtuous characteristics, he added the note that under him none feared the government of the republic.[57]

Yet Guicciardini was not truly impressed with Soderini. He was a good citizen of good family who would probably have done very well in times of peace, but he was basically of moderate calibre. Guicciardini expressed the general judgment of the ottimati on Soderini. Prior to his appointment, there was a well-recognized need for governmental reform. To come to grips with the

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[56] Storia d'Italia, I, 298.

[57] "Oratio accusatoria," pp. 227-228.

immediate problem, it seemed most palatable to all groups to elect a gonfaloniere for life, who would assume the leadership in a long-range plan for reorganizing and perfecting the government. As a compromise between the desires of the ottimati and the populace, the Gran Consiglio, where the election was held, chose a man who had most courted their favor. Since Soderini had never refused a commission or an embassy, he was thought to be a strong supporter of the popular state. Guicciardini explained that the people, witnessing his services utilized more than anyone else's and not considering that the reason was that his equals avoided office, thought he must be more able than the others.[58]

Guicciardini admitted that Soderini's republic actually proved in one sense beneficial for Florence, if not pleasing to the ottimati. The populace during this time and the Savonarolan period preceding it "tasted the sweetness of popular living." The Gran Consiglio had become very important to them as an area allowing their active participation in politics and public administration.[59] By 1512 the citizens of Florence came to feel their equality and desired "more than ever" a continuation of their free and popular government. It was difficult for them to adjust to any superior, let alone the reinstated Medici, "so greatly and entirely of absolute will and lord of everything.[60]

Florence continued to be beset, however, by her usual curse. In 1511,

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[58] Storie fiorentine, p. 251.

[59] "Del governo di Firenze dopo la restaurazione de' Medici nel 1512," Discorsi, pp. 265-266.

[60] Ibid., pp. 261-262.

approaching the end of Soderini's régime, the cleavages among Florentine groups over the government of their city deepened. One group stressed the need for a powerful executive and another, the importance of a strong popular council. Guicciardini maintained that not only was the gonfaloniere "not acting his part" but also there was, as the ottimati had long been suggesting, no duly-ordained senatorial body. This was a requisite for the right institution of a republic. The most able citizens would be promoted to more honorable positions within the commonwealth, and both extremes would be served by this compromise.[61]

The faction that professed only the desire for a Medici return was ultimately satisfied.[62] The Medici were to enjoy their country as private persons living in conformity with the magistracy.[63] Holy League affairs played into the hands of the Medici proponents, and the Congress at Mantua in August of 1512 decided that such a restoration would be conducive to the allied success against the French. Power would be taken out of the hands of Soderini, who was entirely dependent on the King of France, and placed in those of the confederates.[64] Though the Florentines did not wish to depose Soderini, they were forced to take the Medici back and to join the anti-French league.[65] Once Soderini had been deposed, this agreement was easily obtained.

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[61] Storia d'Italia, III, 125.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 224, 228.

[64] Ibid., 221.

[65] Cf. ibid., 231-235.

This was supposedly in the security of all Italy.

In the ensuing reform of the government, the new gonfaloniere was to be elected by the Gran Consiglio not for life but for a term and to hold office for fourteen months. Jacopo Guicciardini informed his son of these changes in Florence.[66] Giovan Battista Ridolfi, related to the Medici, was chosen as gonfaloniere. Jacopo characterized him, according to the generally prevailing sentiment at the beginning of September 1512, as a man who had "a good and civic mind." At the time of his report to Francesco, things were still in a state of flux. Though the future of the city appeared obscure, it was "not without some ray of hope for the popular republic."[67]

A significant number rallied to the Medici for self-interest but then took courage and returned to at least measured action in favor of preserving the republic. They observed the continuing existence of the Consiglio and little change in the form of the government, though it was reported that a movement was underway to create a gonfaloniere for a three-year period with very limited authority.[68]

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[66]Guicciardini had complained of his lack of familiarity with Florentine events since his Spanish residence: "Sono, poi che io partì di Firenze, corse e innovatosi costì tutto el mondo; talmente che io non mi poteva abbattere a essere fuori in tempo che io avessi a aver più voglia di sapere delle cose di costa...." He pointed to the little concern of the magistrates and his own friends in communicating with him: "...se non fussino gli avvisi ho avuti...da questi nostri mercanti, a chi ho a andare drieto per sapere delle nuove di Firenze, ne saprei meno che di quelle della India," Letter to his brother Luigi, June 27-July 1, 1513, Carteggi, I, 188-189.

[67]Letter of Jacopo to Francesco Guicciardini, September 3-4, 1512, ibid., 97.

[68]Ibid.

Only at the beginning of their restoration did the Medici allow republican vestiges of government to operate. Nor did Ridolfi persevere in the firmness and rigor that had characterized his policy at the very beginning of his term.[69] In mid-September all popular Florentine liberties were abolished. Not only did the Medici dissolve Florence's military organization but also the Gran Consiglio. Soderini was banished. Ridolfi reportedly desired to "stay no more than two months," but he was forced to resign. The coup d'état was quick but far-reaching in its effects, for Florence reverted to the strong control of the earlier Medici rulers. Affairs were ultimately managed by the Cardinal de' Medici.[70]

The enemies of the new régime loomed powerfully, for they realized that they would now have nothing to say. Between 1494 and 1512, a segment had become implacable opponents of the Medici who awaited the opportunity to do all they could against their state. Others in Florence were natural enemies who felt their lack of any participation in the state and feared that, not of the Medici circle, they would miss out on the honors that would be distributed.[71] This discontent was concentrated in lo universale of the city, but the monied classes and the merchants too feared that they would be subject to heavy taxation and dictation in their business affairs.[72]

Under Giuliano de' Medici, family policies crystallized in practical

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[69] Jacopo Nardi, Istorie della città di Firenze (Firenze, 1858), II, 2-6.

[70] Cf. Ridolfi, Machiavelli, p. 130.

[71] "Del governo di Firenze," p. 263.

[72] Ibid., pp. 263-264.

action. At his death in 1514, he was succeeded by Lorenzo, the Duke of Urbino, in power at the time of Guicciardini's return from Spain. His observations on the Medici tyrant are interesting, both for the light which they cast on the character of Medici rule and for that which helps to illuminate him.

When Guicciardini entered the city, he was received by Lorenzo, whom he had never seen, with great honor and demonstrations of confidence. Guicciardini explained with satisfaction that this action, together with later favors, indicated his entrance into the intimi. His later imaginary critic pointed to these favors as evidence that Lorenzo found in Guicciardini "a friend useful to the tyranny." Every tyrant looks to that which is desirable for his greatness. Perhaps Guicciardini's critic was correct in his judgment. He knew that his association with Lorenzo would give him riputazione. But Francesco explained that he gravitated into the Medici circle so as "not to lack a way of being employed."[73]

At this point in Guicciardini's career, he seems already to have encountered his major personal dilemma. Should one's political affiliation be based upon devotion to fundamental political principles and beliefs or should he act opportunistically to secure riputazione? His famous "Discorso di Logroño," which considers a plan of political reform to effect in the city a government bene ordinato, would suggest the first alternative.[74]

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[73]"Oratio accusatoria," pp. 216-217; in this work, Guicciardini invented an accuser who found fault with the actions of his career. Cf. also "Ricordanze," p. 75.

[74]This work is also entitled "Del modo di ordinare il governo popolare," Discorsi, pp. 218-259. It was begun during Guicciardini's residence in Spain.

The political thought of Guicciardini rested on a sound experiential foundation. "È grande errore parlare delle cose del mondo, indistintamente ed assolutamente, e per dire così, per regola," are his strong and significant words.[75] He likewise wrote that political science is learned not "in su' libri da' filosofi, ma con la esperienza e con le azioni, che è il modo vero dello imparare."[76]

Guicciardini then did not stress abstract notions regarding the nature and origin of the state but always considered a concrete and actual form of government. He affirmed that all monarchies had a violent origin,[77] but neutralized his position by the statement that "e filosofi vogliono, et la ragione naturale lo conferma, che el governo di uno quando è buono, sia migliore di tutti." The "good government" of which Guicciardini spoke was that which operated for the welfare of the governed and not for the honor or utility of the governor.[78] The prince was not "padrone ma esattore e dispensatore a beneficio di molti."[79] No person would have placed himself in a condition of servitude without reason, as would necessarily have been the case

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[75] Ricordi, II, 6.

[76] Cited in Palmarocchi, p. 9.

[77] Ricordi, I, 95, II, 48. Cf. also Dialogo, p. 163: "...tutti gli stati, che bene considera la loro origine, sono violenti, e dalle republiche in fuora, nella loro patria e non più oltre, non ci è potesta alcuna che sia legittima, e meno quella dello imperatore che è in tanta autorità che dà ragione agli altri; né da questa regola eccettuo e preti, la violenzia de' quali è doppia, perchè a tenerci sotto usono le arme spirituale e le temporali."

[78] Ibid., p. 41. Emphasis added.

[79] Ibid.

if the princely office had been founded simply for the glory of its occupant.[80]

Guicciardini's concept of the violent origin of monarchies was not incompatible with his view on the rightful role of a prince. Nor is his praise for a ruler who pursues measures for the general welfare of his people opposed to his preference for a republican régime and the governo misto.

In spite of the violent origin of monarchies, there could be legitimate ones. Even a usurping monarch was bound to observe the rules of justice.[81] Guicciardini's objective criterion for knowing which governments were good or bad stemmed from their effects. Ordinarily, a violently evil government could only act wickedly.[82] Nor could a government be considered good if it justified a war of ambition to increase its dominion. Killings, rapes, burnings and other infinite evils were all aspects of war. On the other hand, it could justly have such a war in defense of its lands.[83]

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[80]Guicciardini wrote that princes did not originate "per fare beneficio a loro, perchè nessuno si sarebbe messo in servitù gratis," Ricordi, I, 92.

[81]Guicciardini concluded "che se fussi possibile dare uno governo usurpato che si tenessi con quelli modi piacevoli e buoni che si può tenere uno governo amorevole, che questa sola ragione di essere usurpato non lo farebbe peggiore che quell' altro," Dialogo, p. 14.

[82]"Io credo che a cognoscere quale spezie di governo sia più buona o manco buona, non si consideri in sustanzia altro che gli effetti, e che uno governo violento soglia essere giudicato cattivo, perchè ordinariamente suole producere effetti cattivi," ibid. Cf. also "del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 281, where Guicciardini cautions the Medici to exercise a good rule, for wicked governments cannot dream of bringing forth good effects.

[83]Dialogo, pp. 162-163.

Rulers and laws have but one purpose, the general good of the citizenry. The germs of the empirical division between practical life and the religio-moral sphere are evident in Guicciardini's thought. The end of the collective organism of the state and its very raison d'être was conceived of simply as to assure all citizens the free exercise of their civil rights and to work for the common good. Wise legislators consider reward for good action as a stimulus and punishment for bad action as a bridle for any such future acts,[84] and laws are made only "per rimuovere la forza" or to curb individual egoism.[85]

Guicciardini's emphasis on the qualities necessary for a prince,[86] on the ideal citizen,[87] and on liberty[88] in one sense linked themselves with the immutable doctrines of Christian morality and in another with the politico-moral climate of Renaissance Italy. His words on the violent origins of one-man rule corresponded greatly to the two-centuries old situation in Italy, the often usurped signorie, supported in power by the condottieri. His apparent justification of usurpation if the usurper renders justice to those in his charge would seem to indicate that Guicciardini, in one respect, fitted into the prevalent atmosphere of his period in recognizing the status quo, while,

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[84] Ricordi, I, 3.

[85] "Se sia lecito condurre el populo alle buone legge con la forza non potendo farsi altrimenti," Scritti politici, p. 229.

[86] Cf. Ricordi, I, 92.

[87] Cf. infra, p.

[88] Cf. infra, p.

in another, he stood above it by refusing to give way in absolute principles of right action.

Guicciardini held that all ideal views are relative in view of the status quo or reality. Although he preferred a republican form of government, he did not scorn one-man rule in the proper situation. Like Montesquieu, he felt that the mode of government must vary according to the governed. "Il migliore governo che si possa mettere in una città sia el suo naturale."[89]

For Florence, "el suo naturale" consisted in the stabilization of three pillars of Florentine government, the Gran Consiglio, a gonfaloniere for a lengthy or life term, and an assembly of wise citizens for grave public deliberations, which would consider the needs of both the conservative propertied group and the popolano.[90]

From its very origins to Guicciardini's own period, the Florentine constitution, though adapted to popular changes, had remained substantially the same. There was an executive, whether consul, prior or gonfaloniere, and a senate and parliamentary body.[91] Guicciardini considered the development and application of the principles both of liberty and of state authority and also received some stimulating ideas from the Venetian constitution.[92] The sig-

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[89]Dialogo, p. 18.

[90]"Il governo popolare," p. 228. In the discourse, Guicciardini discusses each "pillar" in detail.

[91]Amedeo Crivellucci, Del governo popolare di Firenze (1494-1512) e del duo riordinamento, secondo il Guicciardini (Pisa, 1877), p. 250.

[92]Ibid., p. 312.

nificant increase of senatorial power in his new plan, did not appear to have altered his basic concept of the governo misto.[93]

Guicciardini indicated his belief in the wisdom of the course already followed up to the time of his Logroño discourse, namely, the removal from the Consiglio of all who had not participated in the government prior to Savonarola's reforms. Then it would not include so many ordinary citizens. Although a part of the council came to include "alcuni pazzi, molti ignoranti e molti maligni," the extension of the suffrage was not wholly displeasing to Guicciardini. It was in fact this very situation that kept Florence free from falling under the heel of a tyrant.[94]

His conservative bent together with his strong emphasis on liberty led Guicciardini to advocate a type of moderate traditional democracy. The political and social strength of the various members of the Italic body, for all their separateness, was essential to prevent their subjugation by any foreign power. He was particularly concerned over the fate of his patria. He linked the fate of Florence in great measure to the presence of foreign

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[93]A scholarly dispute has developed around the actual meaning of the proposed reform. Crivellucci maintains that the increase of senatorial power was insufficient to change the essential nature of the popular government and to convert it into a plain oligarchy or an aristocracy. Rather, Guicciardini was concerned with "checking and balancing" the authority of each member of the republic and, therefore, with guaranteeing liberty and strengthening the popular regime, pp. 289, 323. In opposition to this view, that Guicciardini's plan was simply a return to the governo misto of antiquity is that which explains that Guicciardini, by concentrating so much power in the senate, was establishing only an "aristocratic tyranny," Benoist, pp. 155-156.

[94]"Il governo popolare," pp. 228-229.

powers on its soil. Although Florence was poor and disarmed, there was no cause for desperation, for Florentine ills could be cured. In 1512 the task seemed difficult to Guicciardini but not impossible.[95]

The areas of his project of reform which were not strictly political seemed rather utopian. They evidenced nostalgic longing for a return to the Florence which had existed under the first Cosimo de' Medici. There was a need for restoring the old ways and customs. Moderation in dress and the abandonment of the prevalent luxury in Florence would remove the obvious difference between rich and poor and the lesser citizens would not hunger for wealth. Nor would the city become impoverished by the exodus of money in payment for so many imports. The dowry should be reduced to reasonable sums for the maintenance of equality among parents and for the benefit of the virtuous yet poor men for whom it was necessary to marry off their daughters.[96] Lack of thriftiness and the existence of social and economic cleavages affected the very health of the Florentine commonwealth. For all their emphasis on the rightful reordering of the city's government, the majority of Guicciardini's Discorsi are actual socio-political treatises.

In spite of the frequent internal divisions in Florence, he explained, she has long stood in liberty under a popular government with the imperium and

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[95]Guicciardini wrote: "Queste ragione mi fanno male sperare di noi, ma non desperare, perchè io crederrei che se ne potessi sanare una gran parte e che se bene la cura è molto difficile, non sia però impossible," Ibid., p. 219

[96]Ibid. Cf. also "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 281, where Guicciardini explains that, in the matter of men's and women's dress, the city was "so much run above its forces that this could only have a very bad effect in public and in private," p. 281.

leadership of tuscany. In the affairs of Italy, she always has had a significant reputation. In addition to favorable geographical position, this supremacy was due to the virtú of the citizens themselves. Florentine men always worked industriously and, by thrift, achieved a good condition of life. Not all the favorable aspects of Florentine life could be attributed to simple fortune.[97]

To keep the Florentine citizenry content, it was necessary to heed three specific though interrelated areas of civil life, namely, fiscal politics, justice in the civil order, and freedom from the oppression of the weaker and less powerful citizens by the greater and more powerful. His various Discorsi also echo these themes in the interests of a solidly-based commonwealth.

Money is fundamental for a commune's interest. In order to have "piú riputazione per tutta Italia," strict attention must be paid to money matters. Where it is lacking, expenses must be met by taxation of the citizens. Men must be made to understand clearly that they can do business and reap gain yet not be afflicted by taxation. Profits must be distributed usefully and well.

In criminal cases there could be greater larghezza, but, in civil cases, justice should be firm and strict with security for every person. Through favors and deference to wealth, civil matters should not be drawn from ordinary tribunals into extraordinary ones like the Signoria. Cases pending before the podestá and the mercantantia, where the principal judges of the city hold court, should be allowed to run their course.

Guicciardini recalled the common statement that, unless citizens of the

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[97] "Del governo di Firenze," p. 262.

state "feed on something," they will not be its partisans or warm to its beneficio.[98] But graft could only make enemies not only of those who stood oppressed but also of those who witnessed such serious dishonesty.[99]

Guicciardini's treatises on the suffrage and taxation give the views of the conservative group and of the popolani. In both, Guicciardini utilized his cautious method of balance between thesis and antithesis, namely, the moderate-conservative thesis and the eloquent popolano antithesis. This peculiar treatment gave evidence of the ferment long brewing in the city. Regarding the method of electing officials for the Gran Consiglio, the thesis advocated no enlargement of participation in the council. Each citizen was to stand equally under the laws with no distinction between rich and poor, between the powerful and the less powerful. Each was to have the assurance that his person and his property would be secure under the laws and ordinances of the city.[100]

This moderate conservative notion of liberty did not satisfy the popolani. This group held that laws for the defense of property would perpetuate economic inequality. They also suspected the conservative argument that liberty, besides providing equality under the laws, would guarantee public goods and honors to all. In such a system, each person would participate

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[98]The saying is "se e' cittadini dello stato non si pascono di qualche cosa, non saranno partigiani e caldi a beneficio dello stato...." "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 279.

[99]Ibid., pp. 276-279, 281.

[100]"Del modo di eleggere gli uffici nel Consiglio grande," Discorsi, pp. 175-176.

as much as possible and reap as much as he could fruitfully handle. The popolano speaker was suspicious of the conservative qualification that extension of the right of participation in communal affairs should not bring disorder or any harm to the public good.[101]

According to the popolani, superiority of the dominant class was not founded "in sulle virtú, in su' meriti, in sulla prudenzia, ma in cose di fortuna, di favori e di guadagni illeciti."[102] These citizens wanted truly free laws making them equal to the great. The group's speaker in Guicciardini's discourse energetically concluded with a threat to the powerful:

> Ma se da voi medesimi rifiutate el commodo vostro, resterete sanza tutti questi beni, veramente servi, veramente dapochi, ed alla fine cognoscerete che costoro vi hanno dato ad intendere di avervi scritto per compagni in su' libri di questa bottega, ma che in fatto siate garzoni, e che al saldare de' conti a voi restera la fatica, e loro saranno tutti gli utili.[103]

Florentine history could not be understood without acute observation of its substratum of class struggle. The evil effects of the social division would hinder any attempts to stabilize the government. In economic matters, a sorepoint between the conservatives and the popolani consisted in the decima scalata.[104] Here Guicciardini made clear the popular view in his thesis and that of the rigid conservatives in his antithesis though their posi-

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[101] These arguments are given in detail in ibid., pp. 178-185, and are refuted in "Del modo di eleggere gli uffici: in contrario," ibid., pp. 186-195.

[102] Ibid., p. 191

[103] Ibid., p. 195.

[104] This was the progressive tax levied at the time of the Pisan War, "La decima scalata," p. 196.

tion was cloaked in a democratic guise.

The popolani argued that the decima scalata, which had not yet passed the council, was just and that a limitation of valuable property would be of great monetary benefit to the city. Besides, those who lived by the return of their great possessions were useless and pernicious to the general welfare of the city.[105] Merchants alone the speaker excepted, for these were diligent and industrious members of Florentine society. They desired their city to be quiet and the world to be at peace. They made palaces, churches, fabrics and all things to give honor to the city, and they lent money to the commune. While they had ties with the "whole world," they remembered to give to the Florentine poor. They taught the sons of the popolani to work in the shops or other establishments and, in general, demonstrated their usefulness to the public and private good of Florence.[106]

The conservative spokesman observed that the type of equality prevalent in Florence was founded on true liberty which did not mean licence. He explained that God created diverse grades of men and things for the maintenance of universal health.[107] No citizen could oppress another for all were equal

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[105] Ibid., pp. 196-204. Note Guicciardini's words as expressed by the popolani leader: "...troverrete che la città non ha e' più ed e' più pernizïosi cittadini, che questi che vivono in sulle entrate grosse delle possessione....Costoro sono corruttori delle città...." ibid., p. 201

[106] Ibid., pp. 204-206.

[107] Note Guicciardini's important words: "Però bisogna che in uno vivere libero sia amata e favorita la equalità moderatamente, e non quella che levi via e' gradi e le distinzione de' cittadini, perché Dio ha fatto in tutto el mondo diversi e' gradi degli uomini e delle cose, ed è stato distinto, con le legge di tutto el mondo, el tuo dal mio, perche così è necessario a volere mantenere la salute universale," ibid., p. 209; cf. also p. 210.

under the laws and in the council the vote of one was worth the value of another.[108] The function of liberty was to serve as "la ministra della iustizia" and not always to be an equalizing agent.[109] Were the Florentines equal in all things, even the magistracy would be open to the capable as well as the incapable and the city would be reduced to chaos.[110] This conservative egotism held that the very stability of the patria was at issue in considerations on the class structure, for "le liberta non furono introdotto per altro, se non perche ognuno possa sicuramente godere el suo."[111] Further, it would be impossible to persecute these pillars of stability while simultaneously protecting the merchants, for they would lose the important patronage of the wealthy.[112]

To the conservatives, the popolani were "rash and licentious men with new and exorbitant proposals". Any inauguration of their plan in the realm of practical action would open the way to the subversion of the old and accustomed way of living.[113] The decima scalata would bring nothing but terror to those nobles who hope to be able "vivere sicuro alla ombra di questo governo e conservare le sue ricchezze e qualita."[114]

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[108] "La decima scalata: in contrario," pp. 208-209. The most significant words here are: "Io confesso che la equalita e buona in una republica, anzi e necessaria, perche e il fondamento della liberta; ma la equalita che si ricerca consiste in questo; che nessuno cittadino possa opprimere l'altro, che ognuno sia equalmente sottoposto alla legge ed a' magistrati, e che la fava di ognuno che e abile a questo consiglio, abbia tanta autorita l'una quanto l'altra. Cosi si intende la equalita nelle liberta, e non generalmente che ognuno sia pari in ogni cesa....," ibid., p. 208. Cf. also Dialogo, p. 42.

[109] Ricordi, I, 143.

[110] "La decima scalata," p. 210. Cf. also pp. 214-216.

[111] Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[112] Ibid., p. 214.

[113] Ibid., pp. 207-208.

[114] Ibid., p. 216.

Guicciardini carefully expounded the extremes of both groups in his treatise, but his own position, linked with his concept of communal good, seems quite clear. Theoretically, he stood with the people, for their human logic was difficult to oppose. Yet, as can be gleaned from the tone of the antithesis on the matter of the decima scalata, the conservative in him and the borghese's traditional realism, led him to fear the subversion or order in steps toward the concretization of the egalitarian ideal. An ottimati adherent could hold no other position. The words which Guicciardini put into the mouth of the conservative without doubt expressed his own sentiments:

> La prima cosa a che ha pensare chi ordina gli stati e le republiche, e disporre le cose in modo che ognuno abbia nel grado suo a contentarsi ragionevolmente, e che non sia date a nessuno cause giusta o necessita di desiderare cose nuove; perche la citta e uno corpo di tutti e cittadini, e quando uno membro e male condizionato, non puo el resto del corpo stare bene, ne si chiama liberta, quando una parte della citta e oppressata e male trattata dagli, altri, ne e questo el fine a che furono trovata le liberta, che fu che ognuno sicuramente potessi conservare il grado suo; anzi e una tirannide licenziosa, o una licenzia tirannica, la quale non solo e iniqua mentre che dura, ma per le discordie e per e' mali effetti che ne nascono, dura poco, perche dove una parte e male contenta nascono le divisione, e dove sono le divisione non puo essere la stabilita, anzi, come dice el Vangelo, bisogna che el regno in se diviso vadia in desolazione.[115]

Guicciardini observed that these fundamental concepts were operative in times ormai tramontanti, the period of Lorenzo and of Italian equilibrium. He fully realized that "la grandezza dell' uno tempo all'altro non e comparabile"[116] but his backward look enabled him to maintain a kernel of optimism even in his most pessimistic moments. He strongly intimated his admiration for the greatness of the House of Medici and especially for Lorenzo, since there he found the civic tranquility requisite for a state of true excellence. He constructively advanced the possibility of defending the existence

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[115] Ibid., p. 211.

[116] "Del governo di Firenze," p. 262.

and independence of his city as he addressed himself to political problems and socio-economic problems erected on a political base.[117]

Guicciardini's devotion to Lorenzo was based to a great extent on the order in Florence, fostered by his firm yet indirect control of important matters.[118] Still there remained sufficient room for Florentine initiative to operate.[119] A balance between authoritative rule and freedom for individual action constituted Guicciardini's ideal.

With the Medici restoration, Guicciardini contemplated the manner of stabilizing their rule for the benefit of Florence. The situation in 1512 was not what it had been in 1434 when their house first came to power. Then the various factions fought until a superior leader arose only to be displaced in a short while by the head of another group. Citizens of mediocre worth found this deplorable situation profitable, for concessions given for support enabled them to improve their status in the city.

This situation did not allow even the more perceptive citizens to realize the power of the Medici. The state which came into their hands in 1434 did not seem to have been taken from "al popolo, ma a uno messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi, a uno messer Palla Strozzi ed a altri simili particulari." Furthermore, at the beginning, the Medici were not absolute padroni, but their power gradually increased until it reached its height in Lorenzo.[120]

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid. Guicciardini explained that Lorenzo handled matters through civil channels, not in open view but "minima alla scoperta."

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid., pp. 262-263.

After the restoration of 1512, Medici supporters comprised two groups. One, not "interamente pazzi," was forced to stake everything with the Medici, for their members would be odious and unwelcome in any state. They were generally content with their lot. The second group, whose members were mostly noble men who had functioned importantly in the popular state, also found it necessary to work with the Medici. Their new status in the employ of the Medici rulers made them fear further change by any agitated group of citizens. All friendly to the past ruling regime would undoubtedly suffer great peril.[121] For these personal reasons, they mustered all their forces for the state's conservation.[122] These partisans would not have to fear Medici jealousy, though the rulers were so strong that they could ruin even a powerful citizen at the first sign of danger.[123]

Although the Medici state in 1512 was a far cry from Guicciardini's state under ottimati control, he considered how "questa barca" might survive the rough waters of suspicion and animosity. The rulers would find it necessary to decide prudently on whose allegiance they desired above all others. The support of lo universale would require the distribution of honors with as much

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[121]After the first expulsion of the Medici in 1494, their friends, who "el fiore della città," were allowed to remain and to participate with others in the government after only a few months. Such would not be the case if the Medici were to be expelled again, "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 275.

[122]"Del governo di Firenze," p. 262.

[123]"Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 276.

equality as possible with attention to the security of the lesser citizens from the greater. Guicciardini found the alternate course the wisest. A wise ruler would restrict his favors to a select group of partisans on whom he would confer all honors and benefits.[124] These adherents would place themselves in every danger to maintain the power and wealth they had received from the new regime and to avoid exile.[125]

Just as the regime's partisans stood also to lose by the ruler's loss of power, the Cinquecento state had to choose its supporters and to increase their benefits lest it fall. Already in 1512 Guicciardini realized that

> Nessuna amicizia oggidì si misura se non quanto è accompagnata dalla utilità, e dove non è questa non si puo avere nessuna fede.[126]

So strong would this partisan support be that it would have respect for nothing in order to maintain its power.[127] In his own period Guicciardini found no other method of securing princely rule. Enemies remained powerful and friends few and unwilling to risk their safety by courageous action.[128] Men were led by their own particular interest, "la maestra che ne mena tutti

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[124]"Del governo di Firenze," p. 265.

[125]Ibid., p. 266. Cf. "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," pp. 275-276, where Guicciardini points out that these partisans must be "discreetly managed."

[126]Ibid.

[127]Ibid. Not only did the fear of change extend to loss of honors but also to "le facultà e la vita, e però sarebbe forze che non avessino rispetto a nulla per mantenerli."

[128]Ibid.

gli uomini."[129] Cinquecento Florence was unlike the ancient periods of Greece and Rome, when magnanimous sentiments could be found. Guicciardini wondered if any Florentine, if he perceived gain himself, would not turn completely to a new régime:

> Non sono piú e tempi antichi de' romani e de' greci, ne' quegli ingegni generosi e tutti aspiranti alla gloria: nessuno è a Firenze che ami tanto la libertá ed el reggimento populare che, se gli e dato in uno altro vivere piu parte e migliore assere che non pensa di avere in quello, non vi si vòlti con tutto lo animo....[130]

By 1516, the Medici were not able to consolidate the Florentine state, though in 1513 great hopes for a return to better times had been prevalent. The election of Giovanni de' Medici as Pope Leo X seemed a "miraculous occurrence" for the city under Medici domination. Neither his power nor his youth could compensate for the continuing presence of discontented Medici friends and of a generally jealous and suspicious populace. The Medici régime still had no truly powerful partisans.[131] Four years after his original discourse on the Medici restoration, Guicciardini was still advocating a method for strengthening their rule.

Leo X's personal greatness obscured the weak foundation of the Medici régime, a dangerous thing for its security:

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[129] "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," p. 274.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., pp. 267-268.

> perché le qualità de' tempi e felicità si mutono, ed è debole cosa essere tutto fondate in sulla vita di uno uomo solo, quale quando morissi, si vedrebbono li effetti di questi disordini....[132]

Serious problems could arise even during Leo's lifetime. Guicciardini's hearers remembered well the sudden catastrophe of the French invasion of 1494. Selfish individualistic action amid the confusion showed that none considered resisting attack for the welfare of Florence.[133]

Citizens were not apt to put time and energy into an endeavor from which satisfaction was not likely. To aid in consolidating theFlorentine state in 1516 Guicciardini advised its rulers to make the state great and important. An extension of Florentine boundaries would give Medici lordship a strong foundation. Without this any other endeavor would be ruined with the first adversity.[134]

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[132] Ibid., p. 268.

[133] Ibid., Guicciardini noted "che a ogni furia che fussi venuta, nessuno era che avessi pensato a resistere, ne al beneficio della città o della stato ma solo ciascuno a sé proprio." To avoid such a pitiful situation, Guicciardini argued with an appropriate metaphor. Prudent mariners repair their ships and all its instruments either when they are in port or when things are going well so that they can resist any future tempest. So also should one who steers the rudder of the stateindustriously repair its weak spots and urge its members to have power in reserve for every accident that might arise (valersi di tutto el nervo e virtú sua), ibid.

[134] Guicciardini equated Church holdings with Medici holdings. Under the Medici, Florence tried to expand northward, but already they found it necessary to abandon Parma and Piacenza. Their possession of Modena and Reggio was uncertain. Not only were there serious weaknesscs in these areas but they were in dispute with the Duke of Ferrara, ibid., p. 270.

Not only was it important to have good and faithful partisans, men of "riputazione," for Medici strength but also they had to have a knowledge of current Florentine affairs. Since the majority of Medici partisans had grown up in periods of civil troubles, they had been "nutriti fuora e non avezzi alle cose nostre." If these men would learn Florentine ways and what is essential for good government, they would not be apt to advise action that might lead to trouble or disorder.[135]

Guicciardini believed that he knew what course was best for Florence. He could uphold a rule under "questa ombra di civilita e di liberta." He did not agree with the rather prevalent view that the Medici would be more secure if they were to seize absolute and open control of the city by title as well as fact. In time this course would prove "most pernicious for them and for us" and would lead to ultimate and intense cruelty.[136]

While he proclaimed his loyalty to the Medici house, Guicciardini admitted that he found contemplation on government "tanto bello, tanto ororevole e magnifico pensiero."[137] On governments depend the well-being and health of men

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[135] Ibid., pp. 271-272.

[136] Ibid., p. 281.

[137] He hoped that his considerations of Florentine government would not lead to his classification "come ingrato." He had great, even extraordinary, obligations to the Medici. Two popes of that house, Leo and Clement, had employed him in their service and had honored him excessively, "come persona in chi hanno avuto, ed ha piú che mai Clemente, somma confidenzia." None should infer that Guicciardini had "animo alieno dalla grandezza loro, né che la loro autorita mi dispiaccia." He compared his own situation with that of Aristotle and Alexander the Great. The philosopher was not Alexander's enemy because he had written the Politica, Dialogo, pp. 3,5.

and the success of all collective actions.[138] Discord in Florence was more dreadful than ever during a period when there were foreign armies within the peninsula, "breathing slaughter and destruction."[139]

In his Dialogo, Guicciardini considered the fundamental problem of who is to rule. Its two books were written during the period in which he served as lieutenant-general of the Holy See and as commander of the papal troops leagued with France. Although he despaired of ever seeing the original freedom of Florence regained during this troublous time, there was nothing to prevent him from considering the ideal republic. He thought that one of the ordinary accidents in human affairs might occur to return Florence to the type of government it had under Soderini. This would indicate that "the people were not yet so corrupt that they should be regarded as incapable of liberty." Further, when Plato meditated and wrote on the republic, he did not believe that his system would be adopted by the then very undisciplined Athenians. He noted rather that he despaired of ever seeing them govern themselves well and he did not care to become involved in their affairs. Like Plato, Guicciardini would consider only the ideal.[140]

The scene is the year 1494, several months after the expulsion of Piero de' Medici and the early stages of Savonarola's predominance in government.

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[138] Ibid., p. 3.

[139] Dialogo, p. 126.

[140] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

The three speakers are Piero Capponi, who had been instrumental in Piero's expulsion, Pagolantonio Soderini, the ambassador to Venice who, though a blood relative of the Medici, had opposed the tyranny of Piero,[141] and Pietro Guicciardini, Francesco's father, who had filled several important posts under the Medici rulers. All were young, zealous, and enervated by the events of the recent Medici ouster. Bernardo del Nero,[142] an old but very wise man who also had functioned importantly under the Medici, did not feel that the revolution was a triumph. He could not share the young men's enthusiastic hopes for the future, because he realized the often trifling nature of governmental changes.

He testified that he based his judgments on common sense and experience, for he had not studied the works of learned philosophers. Of the three possible forms of government--that of one, of several or of all--only the first appeared good. He pointed to the desirable effects of the Medicean government in contrast to the less beneficial results of the two other types. In their corrupt period, Bernardo felt that theory should be abandoned and a government was to be judged only by its results.

The trio of questioners felt that experience alone could never be the final determinant in politics. Rather here, as in the science of morality, certain basic principles dominate all actions. If these principles are based

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[141] These figures should not be confused with Piero Soderini and Niccolò Capponi.

[142] Upon the encouragement of the party of Piero de Medici and the instigation of Venetians who desired to keep Pisa, Bernardo del Nero, the pro-French gonfaloniere, plotted a Medici return. When the plot was discovered, Bernardo del Nero was sentenced to be executed for preferring friendship to service, Storia d'Italia, I, 264, 297.

on reason and truth, experience must verify them.

The three applied the criteria of virtue and vice to the actions of the Medici rulers and found them wanting on the very basis of experience that Bernardo was so warmly advocating. They lamented "che vituperio: che vergogna!" as they considered that the noble and respected city of Florence had become a slave against her will as she fell under the heel of foreign forces. This they blamed primarily on the Medici. The conclusion, expressed by Capponi, was that, under the Medici rule of one, family interests affected even such weighty matters as foreign affairs. Upon the shoulders of one man, talented or otherwise, rested all grave concerns. Honors went to favorites instead of to deserving cit zens. Under such an administration, justice is always corrupted, not always because the ruler desires this but often because of clever sycophants.

Bernardo pointed out that their ideal government would have these and other faults as well. He admitted his suspicion of civil discords stirred up in the name of liberty, since most often personal ambition is at their basis, and a deliverer from tyranny usually becomes a tyrant himself. He argued that, since the people have no discernment, a popular government cannot be good. Under such a system, there is no control over the administration of justice, magistrates fear to antagonize the people who support them, abuses are multiplied, and the envious poor strike at riches beyond measure to the great detriment of the city and ultimately to the poor themselves.

Bernardo del Nero was not a Medici partisan per se but looked upon the stability they brought to Florence. Yet it seemed better that they should not be restored to power, he remarked, for this could be accomplished only by

foreign military strength. Desires for revenge would be rampant and force used to assure their power. He sincerely admonished the young men to maintain union in the republic by aiding the principal citizens to lay aside their ambitions to avoid internal dissension which could only prepare the way for a new tyrant or for serious dissolution and anarchy. His last caution was that Florentine government must not seek to imitate the Venetian, for each country calls for its own kind of rule.[143]

With his mouthpieces of both persuasions, Francesco Guicciardini was partially in agreement. Like the trio, he upheld warmly the idea of liberty, but, like Bernardo, he looked back at sad experience. The sentiments he attributed here to the old man actually seem to have been those he held with conviction as the final product of his long and serious thought on matters of government. Practical necessity, success, stability--these were to be the norms of sixteenth-century thought for minds like those of Guicciardini. The whole tenor of the Dialogo seems to bear out the truth of the observation that it was written only at the end of a "philosophical contemplation of political truth,"[144] specifically Cinquecento political truth.

Strong and intelligent rule was important for Florentine health, for "la

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[143]These arguments, very briefly summarized here, are discussed in detailed dialogue form in Book I of the Dialogo, pp. 7-84.

[144]This is the view of Crivelluci, p. 19, and also of Barkhausen, pp. 60-61.

ignorznzia è cieca, confusa e sanza termine e regola, e però dice el proverbio che spesso è meglio avere a fare col maligno che có l'ignorante."[145] Love of the patria was not synonymous with love of liberty. One could love his patria while living under a tyranny. Further, equality for all citizens under the laws would perhaps be even better served under a well-ordered government than under a popular one.[146] Licenzia, an enemy and destroyer of the patria, was not the foundation of liberty but of the worst type of tyranny.[147]

A suitable and stable government for Florence was Guicciardini's major concern. The two things in the world that he desired more than any others were his city's "perpetual exaltation" and the glory of "casa nostra" forever. He begged God to increase both.[148] His first wish was to see the establishment of a well-ordered republic in Florence during his lifetime.[149] Bernardo had outlined Guicciardini's own plan of government by the ottimati, and had shown its relationship to the government of Venice, "per una citta disarmata sia cosi citta disarmata sia cosí bella come forse mai avessi alcuna republica libera."[150]

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[145] Dialogo, p. 46.

[146] Ibid., pp. 38-39, 42.

[147] Ibid., p. 100.

[148] "Memorie di famiglia," Scritti autobiografici, p. 3.

[149] The second wish was for the freedom of Italy from all foreign invaders and the third, the "freedom of the entire world from the tyranny of wicked priests," Ricordi, I, 14.

[150] Dialogo, p. 106.

Both would have a Gran Consiglio, and Florence's gonfaloniere would correspond to Venice's Doge as would all lesser parts of the governments.[151]

Yet Guicciardini felt pessimistic regarding the Florentine future. To him, there were many more reasons for believing that its republic must soon fall into decay than there were for holding that it would long endure.[152] Bernardo could only advocate, like Guicciardini, that the Florentines be contented with the times che corrono and accomodate themselves as best they could to the government under which they lived while they lookedto the future reforms.[153] Virtù was nothing else than knowing when the time was ripe to inaugurate reforms, patience in waiting for an occasion which could make an undertaking easy which would otherwise be difficult: "e questa è una delle ragione che e pazienti sono tanuti savi."[154] Guicciardini's agreement with Bernardo showed that he was a conservative but an opportunist as well.

Guicciardini thought that honor and amibition were more important than anything else. He admitted that the management of public affairs and the grandeur accompanying them attracted the "supreme homage" of men and perhaps excusably so, for ambition seems to many to make them equal to the gods.[155]

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[151] For a detailed treatment of these points, cf. ibid., pp. 100-185.

[152] Ricordi, I, 9.

[153] Dialogo, pp. 82-85.

[154] Ibid., p. 162.

[155] "Consolatoria," cited in Geffroy, "Une autobiographie," p. 673.

If one who desires to become supreme in Florence is of the Medici line and is backed by papal power, Guicciardini advised, he can hope to attain this height. If not of the house of Medici, his only method of achieving success lay in affecting the popular cause with the hope of being elected by the free voice of the people as their constitutional chief, as in the case of Piero Soderini.[156] Self-interest and sheer utilitarianism are linked here. The same holds true of Guicciardini's cautious advice to a good citizen, not to connect himself with the Medici government lest the people come to dislike him, though he should not for this reason withdraw altogether from such a connection or forego the benefits to be derived from it.[157]

Guicciardini's major dillemma was evident in his devotion to Florentine liberty as exemplified in the republic and his ideal of cooperation with the status quo for reasons of honor and self-interest. This accounts in large measure for his conflicting attitudes on the Medici rulers. Guicciardini's own political affiliations followed such a course. After the Medici expulsion of 1527, Niccolò Capponi,[158] "cittadino di grande autorità ed amatore della

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[156] Ricordi, I, 155.

[157] Ibid., 136. Emphasis added.

[158] Cf. Roth, pp. 59-64, for Capponi's early career and his policy as gonfaloniere.

liberta," was elected gonfaloniere in the new republic, reminiscent of that of Piero Soderini. Though heading a moderate government, Capponi was a representative of the ottimati, and, like declared members of the palleschi faction, had a rather pronounced sympathy for another Medici return to power. With Capponi, Guicciardini consecrated his efforts to reform in the face of stout opposition and to the reconciliation of the Florentine republic with the Pope and the Emperor.[159] While theoretically upholding the principles of the revolution of 1527, Guicciardini continued his correspondence with Clement VII, though in his capacity as pope and not as lord of Florence.[160]

In 1529 a minor riot occurred in which Capponi was overthrown by those who realized that his defense of Medici partisans would mean the lessening of their own power.[161] The arrabbiati gonfaloniere, Francesco Carducci,[162] succeeded him in office. He was corrupt, Guicciardini judged, and unworthy of so great an honor.[163] Under his administration there was persecution of the Medici partisans, confiscation of their goods, and, as had taken place in some measure under the Capponi regime, overturning of the statues of the Medici popes and

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[159] "Ragioni che consigliano la signoria di Firenze ad accordarsi con Clemente VII," Scritti politici, p. 214.

[160] Rossi, I, 67-68.

[161] Storia d'Italia, V, 252-253.

[162] Cf. Bernardino Barbadoro, "Francesco Carducci," Enciclopedia italiana (Roma, 1930), VIII, 995.

[163] Storia d'Italia, V, 252-253.

the effacing of their arms on the Medici palace.[164] Such offences naturally rendered any republican accord with Clement VII impossible to achieve. The Emperor, attempting to ally himself with Clement VII, offered his troops for the rrestablishment of Medici government in Florence.[165] Guicciardini left Florence to meet Clement VII at Rimini, following him to Bologna, where the Pope was to have an interview with Charles V. When he disobeyed the orders of the "Otto di Guardia e Balía"[166] to appear before it to justify his conduct, he was condemned as a rebel and his goods were confiscated.

The Florentines heroically defended their city before the papal and imperial troops which besieged it, but in August 1530 they were forced to surrender.[167] In Clement's defense, Guicciardini explained that he had capitulated with Charles at Barcelona with the proviso that there be nothing more than a change in the city's pro-French government.[168]

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[164] Pastor, IX, 426; cf. also François T. Perrens, Histoire de Florence depuis la domination des Médicis jusqu'à la chute de la republique (1484-1531) (Paris, 1888-1890), III, 136.

[165] Cf. Pastor, 56-57, for a discussion of this and the other terms of the Treaty of Barcelona, concluded between Charles V and the papal nuncio, Girolamo da Schio, on June 29, 1529.

[166] This body, usually referred to simply as the Otto, functioned as the supreme criminal court of Florence.

[167] The Florentines put up a brave resistance against the wishes of Clement VII, who is reported to have exclaimed distractedly, "Would that Florence had never existed!" Pastor, X, 100-103.

[168] "Ragioni che consigliano la signoria di Firenze," Scritti politici, pp. 214-251.

The Otto di pratica[169] began a cruel and bloody purge of the city, with deaths, exiles, and confiscations, to rid it of all partisans of the fallen republic. Guicciardini played a significant role here, justifying these cruelties on the grounds that they were necessary for the consolidation of the state. In such a situation, he admitted that he felt it necessary to renounce all methods of mildness.[170] In his outline of a complete political program for the new situation, he considered it wise for the restored Medici to maintain a republican facade in government while they really held absolute power. Just as Caesar Augustus or Lorenzo de' Medici had done, such duality could be so skillfully handled that even friends would be disarmed. Not only the banishment of citizens with the old republican notions was necessary, but also that of young men who had served as chiefs of the militias in the preceding struggle. For stabilizing Medici power, Guicciardini counselled further a close supervision of marriages so that young citizens would not choose wives from enemy ranks. While the prince should have a regular council of twenty to twenty-five members, still more important for him was a secret council of four of five men, known for their fidelity, prudence, and ability to handle even the gravest affairs of state. Such a prince would have a secure foundation for his rule if he could count on but two hundred of the best-qualified citizens to support him.[171]

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[169]The Otto di pratica had been instituted by Lorenzo the Magnificent as a committee of the "Settanta" to deal with foreign and military affairs. Since it had come to be a symbol of despotic government, it was swept away with the Medici, though it reappeared with them, Roth, 60.

[170]Cited in Antoniade, p. 185.

[171]"Del governo di Firenze," pp. 261-266. Cf. also "Del modo di assicurare lo stato," ibid., pp. 267-281.

The charter of the restoration of 1530 specified that liberty was to be preserved, but this proved to be merely a form. Clement VII disregarded the terms of the capitulation by July 1531 and had Carducci, as well as the last gonfaloniere, Girolami, hanged. He intended to found an absolutism in Florence by appointing his nephew, Alexander, the natural son of Lorenzo, the Duke of Urbino, as head of the masquerading republic. On April 27, 1532, the new constitution was made public, whereby Alexander became gonfaloniere for life and hereditary Duke of Florence. But the actual reins of government remained in the hands of Clement VII.[172]

Guicciardini left Florence when Clement VII obtained for him the post of vice-legate of Bologna in June 1531. His services here and against Ferrara were especially valued by the House of Medici.[173] Paul III, a Farnese and an enemy of the Medici, did not wish to retain Guicciardini in the important Bolognese legation after Clement's death. Guicciardini returned to Florence in January

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[172]Pastor, X, 104-105. At this time, Clement VII showed himself eager to effect a reconciliation between Francis I and Charles V. The Emperor, considering this a hopeless aim, proposed an Italian defensive league to secure Milan and Genoa against French attacks. Venice resolutely opposed this idea. It was little in keeping with the policy of a pope considered neutral. Further Clement continued to insist upon the restoration of Modena and Reggio. Other complicating factors came to affect Clement, especially the threatening attitude assumed at the beginning of 1533 by Francis I, an ally of Henry VIII, ibid., 217.

[173]Ibid., 340. cf. also Agostino Rossi, "Studi Guicciardiniani," Archivio Storico italiano, V, ser. 5, 1890, 20-60; and E. Zanoni, Vita pubblica di Francesco Guicciardini, con nuovi documenti, Bologan, 1896.

1535 to become a counsellor to Duke Alexander, surrounded by assassins and firmly opposed to those struggling for Florentine independence. Under this rule, Florence would remain the capital of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.[174]

The specific motives for Guicciardini's service to the younger Medici line are not easy to fathom. Adherence to the rule of the odious Alexander because of affection can be ruled out. Perhaps he considered the Medici as the most probable guarantee of at least one genre of Florentine independence, namely, independence from the Emperor, who could easily have subjegated the city more completely. Only in this light or, more probably, in the light of self-interest, are we able to understand his successful defense of Alexander at Naples, where a great number of exiles presented their grievances to Charles V in 1535 and demanded the Duke's deposition. To Guicciardini, these were "unjust accusations."[175]

The piagnoni and the popular party still dreamed of the reestablishment of a popular government, led by the monks of San Marco, who proclaimed that Savonarola's prophecies would now be realized and Florentine liberty recovered.[176]

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[174]After the death of Clement VII, Florentine exiles included important personages like Filippo Strozzi, Ippolito de' Medici, the historians Jacopo Nardi, Benedetto Varchi, and Donato Giannotti. They entered into a bitter struggle with Alexander, calling him a tyrant and usurper, Antonaide, 186.

[175]Charles V, of course, did not desire to restore any popular régime or republican liberties in Florence. To the exiles he replied that their request, if granted, could lead only to grave danger, interference in the internal affairs of Florence! Alexander retained the duchy and married Marguerite of Austria, a natural daughter of Charles V, after paying the Emperor a hundred twenty thousand ducats, ibid., pp. 186-187.

[176]Geffroy, "Une autobiographie," p. 677.

Without arms, however, this was hardly possible. Further, Guicciardini was instrumental in preventing any such result. Leading the major palleschi, he hastened to proclaim Cosimo de' Medici, a member of the younger branch of Giovanni by a relative, Lorenzino, in January 1537.

But Guicciardini's plan of setting in operation his government of the ottimati under the apparently unassuming, inexperienced young Medici failed. He thought to secure his plan by having Cosimo engaged to one of his daughters, but the girl was sent back.[177] He tried to impose several conditions to limit the ruler's power, like the institution of a Senate without which he could decide nothing, but Cosimo triumphed because of continued imperial support. Making himself absolute, he annulled all the conditions under which he had been chosen.

For his support of Alexander and Cosimo, Guicciardini's imaginary accurser charged him with having acted as "lo instrumento di offendere ed oscurare el nome della patria...." When he had had the very rare opportunity of giving speical service to his Florence,[178] he bowed before the tyranny of the later Medici.

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[177]Both Cosimo de' Medici's mother and Guicciardini's first wife were members of the important Salviati family, Benoist, 82.

[178]"Accusatoria", p. 212.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGION OF GUICCIARDINI

The study of religion in Guicciardini in its varied aspects must serve to reconstruct his character if it is true that "in tutti gli scrittori politici la parte del loro pensiero che riflette la religione è il punto di controllo del loro intero sistema, dove si vede meglio il fondo dell'autore."[1]

Like that of various other personages of the Renaissance, Guicciardini's religious views have suffered from contrary descriptions. He is associated sometimes, and without sufficient basis, with the conception so often prevalent of the irreligiosity of the period.

The classic and indelible portrait, somewhat exaggerated, is that of Guicciardini as "l'uomo savio," the typical exponent of the Italian society of his age and a type possible only in a corrupt civilization. He is sketched as a cold intellect combining the famous *discrezione* with knowledge and experience, holding to neither ideas nor illusions, and relying necessarily upon his own judgment, *speculare* and *misura*.[2] While patriotism, liberty and justice did

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[1]Paolo Treves, Il *realismo politico di Francesco Guicciardini* (Firenze, 1931), p. 56.

[2]For a descriptive explanation of *discrezione*, cf. infra, pp.

exist for him, they were only in the guise of abstract ideas, never living sentiments which spurred him to action as they did Machiavelli. Guicciardini's only god was his own selfish interest and his desire for riputazione. He would not, these writers argue, sacrifice his ambitions to the ideals of liberty and self-denial, since these befitted only the pazzi and the ignorant, certainly not the savi.[3] These views perpetuate the nineteenth-century patriotic criticism of Guicciardini, formulated on the basis of his Ricordi.

Even if not this type of Cinquecento Italian, they write, Guicciardini was at least an opportunist par excellence.[4] In the interest of self, he forgot that moral greatness means a genuine manly triumph.[5] Still more than Machiavelli, he exemplified the worthlessness of politics as a science independent of morality.[6]

Sometimes Guicciardini is described as a man indifferent to religion, a skeptic, a pagan, or an adherent of a formalistic faith with no intellectual or moral content, as one who remained simply in outward fashion in the Church since he never got around to breaking with it.[7]

Since such descriptions of the man are obviously quite onesided, they can not be wholly accurate. Fra Remigio Fiorentino, a Dominican, and a contemporary of Guicciardini, judged him to be a man "molto religioso e dotato d'ottimi e

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[3]De Sanctis, "L'uomo del Guicciardini," pp. 1-23.

[4]Carlo Ségre, "Guicciardini," Nuova antologia, LXVII, ser. 4 (1897), 472.

[5]Geffroy, "Un politique italien," pp. 962, 991, 993.

[6]Benoist, p. 130.

[7]Otetea, pp. 318-320.

santissimi costumi."[8] A student of Guicciardini expressed astonishment over the spirit of religious fervor evident in him that one would not expect to find in "un politico così realista."[9] Another sees in his belief not formalism but the sentiments of a true and living faith to the extent that in his writings "la soggezione a Dio ricorre come atteggiamento che informa la psicologia o la mentalità dell'uomo."[10] Guicciardini himself admitted that he reflected on the tribulations of life first "come filosofo ed uomo del mondo" but also "come cristiano."[11] But the two are not incompatible.

Guicciardini referred to his upbringing by a good father, "tanto catolico."[12] Already in 1503 his personal ambition was the basis of his temptation to become a priest finally, and to succeed to the numerous benefices of his uncle Rinieri, archdeacon of Florence and bishop of Cortona. His father dissuaded him from entering religion for such a base motive. While Piero had hopes of his son becoming rather a great teacher, Francesco was content with his father's other reason, namely, that he would soil his conscience by making his son a priest by greed for possessions or for renown.[13]

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[8]Carlo Angeleri, "Il Guicciardini nella Vita di Fra Remigio Fiorentino," Francesco Guicciardini nel IV centonario, p. 229. Cf. also Francesco Sarri, "Guicciardini e la religione," ibid., p. 144.

[9]Nulli, p. 30.

[10]Malagoli, p. 91.

[11]"Consolatoria," p. 189.

[12]"Oratio accusatoria," p. 198.

[13]"Ricordanze," Scritti autobiografici, pp. 55-56. Of his father's view, Francesco wrote "parendogli che le cose della Chiesa fussino molto transcorse." Further, "che maculare la conscienza sua di fare un figliuolo prete per cupidita di roba o di grandezza."

At the age of thirty, Francesco already seemed to realize the vanity of this life and the reasons that wicked men fear the future while good men have hope. He knew that he had received many blessings and praised God for his goodness and beneficience.[14] He lamented the spiritual poverty of his uncle, the bishop. The latter remained a man of evil habits.[15] He described his father's peaceful death in 1513, fortified by all the sacraments of the Church and deep devotion, "e talmente che si può sperare che Dio al certo lo abbi ricevuto in luogo di salute." He equated the good life with consolation, for he felt much less the death of his father when he considered his goodness.[16] He wrote of his intense desire to see Piero again in heaven. He saw that even in adversity there were consolations that faith alone could give. He wrote that God had His reasons for sending trials and tribulations to man and, if accepted as divine visitations, they could redound to his ultimate credit.[17]

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[14] "A se stesso," ibid., p. 99.

[15] "Memorie di famiglia," ibid., p. 48.

[16] "Ricordanze," pp. 71-73.

[17] Guicciardini wrote that "le tribulazione del mondo sono spesso desiderabile perche sono visitazione di Dio a chi le riceve con forte animo, e mezzo a conseguire quella eterna felicità," "Consolatoria," p. 189. Again: "Perchè come tu proponessi la memoria dell' altra vita, a comparazione della quale questa e uno punto, e che Dio manda spesso la tribulazione agli uomini non per gastigarli, ma per purgarli, e che chi amor suo le tollera pazientemente ha da reputare felicità lo essere visitato da Lui di qua con questi modi, perchè mirabilmente approfittano di la; chi dico si riducessi a memoria queste cose, sarebbe ne' tuoi dispiaceri con maggiore piacere che non avesti mai nelle tue felicità," ibid., p. 169.

Nor were the statements of Guicciardini's youth dimmed by the bitterness of his political experiences as an old man.

Guicciardini's religion seems to have been founded on the basic contrariety of human nature. Since man is naturally inclined to good (his was an optimistic position), Guicciardini saw that there was no advantage in evil.[18] A person who would prefer evil to good must be considered a beast rather than a man for he lacks an instinct common to men by nature.[19] But Guicciardini saw too the self-interest could readily incline a man to evil, since he is frail and is continually tempted by what is wrong.[20] Since, for the most part, man's afflictions stem from his excessive desires, he is his own worst enemy.[21]

At time, too, Guicciardini seemed very much aware of the presence of the divinity and the power of His unseen actions. He admonished men to beware of contending against religion or anything which had close dependence upon God.[22] He upheld the dignity and authority of the Church as an institution and its divine power to rebuild itself spiritually.[23] During the sack of Rome, he was deeply concerned lest profanations occur "senza rispetto alcuno nè di onore di

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[18] Ricordi, I, 3.

[19] Ibid., 4.

[20] Ibid., 3.

[21] Ibid., 139.

[22] Ibid., 31.

[23] "La reverenzia ed autorità /della Chiesa/ non muore mai, e se talvolta qualcuna dello sue ragioni e sì invecchiata che e quasi in oblivione, tornano poi e tempi, e risurge più fresco el suo diritto e più potente che mai," Dialogo, p. 160.

donne, nè di reliquie sacre, nè di sacramenti, nè di Dio."[24] In spite of his sympathy for every reform in the Church,[25] he attacked the Council of Pisa as false and productive of division in the Church.[26]

Yet the gulf Guicciardini sometimes drew between morality and the rule of the state carried over into some vague but suspicious utterances on the essential qualities of religion. He argued that "excessive religion" was harmful to the world, insofar as it made men's minds effeminate and prone to error and hindered them from acting honorably. He stressed that his advice was not to be understood as derogating from the Christian faith or the veneration due it. He intended rather to confirm the faith by pointing out its fundamentals from its excesses so that men would know what is to be taken seriously and what is to be disregarded.[27]

Guicciardini thought that the Church placed too much emphasis on external works. While prayer, fasting and other devout observances prescribed by the Church or recommended by friars are not wrong, "the best of all good observances, and in comparison wherewith all others are insignificant, is to wrong no man and do what good you can to all."[28] This is the familiar laicized and secular humanitarian concept, diametrically opposed, however, to the

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[24]"La prigionia di Clemente VII," Opere inedite, IX, 35.

[25]Cf. Storia d'Italia, III, 102.

[26]"L'Italia dopo la giornata di Ravenna," Scritti politici, p. 87.

[27]Ricordi, I, 32.

[28]Ibid., II, 159. Emphasis added.

classical view of the ruthless self-interest of the Renaissance period.

While he seems to have accepted immutable Christian doctrine as defined and preserved by the Church, he thought that men should not dabble in religious studies. Even theologians and philosophers who write of supernatural things utter "a thousand follies." Their probing seems to be more an exercise of the intellect than a means of discovering the truth.[29] It demonstrates a lack of wisdom to preach on certain "thorny articles of our faith" like predestination. Guicciardini argued that he was not objecting to the doctrines of the Church though he felt that they should not be tampered with lest they give men the occasion to think of things which the ordinary man can never understand. Such ideas create doubts which can be settled only by the ready acceptance of Church doctrine.[30] Here Guicciardini seems to evidence his belief in a blind faith with no questioning. Reasoning in the religious sphere brought about doubts and he had no sympathy with them.

On the other hand, he thought that miracles give no more proof for the existence of the Christian God than any other gods. They should be considered simply as "secrets of nature to the depths of which the mind of man cannot penetrate."[31] Strong faith can lead man to believe things that are not true, just as certain effects are credited to the intercession of the saints at their

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[29] Ibid., 125.

[30] Ibid., I, 135.

[31] Ibid., II, 123.

various shrines.[32] He manifested the same fear of becoming too involved with non-human spheres like signs and portents in which he very definitely believed.

Guicciardini's evaluations of prodigies, prognostications, fortuna, and the operations of divine providence are rather closely allied. The Middle Ages believed that free will determined men's actions while providence guided them, but, for this view, the Renaissance substituted the prime role of fortuna and virtù.[33] Though one of the dominant motives of Guicciardini's work is "l'imperio della fortuna," which no man can fully escape, he, unlike Machiavelli, did not concede to virtù a significant amount of autonomy.[34]

Some hold that Guicciardini's historical concept superseded that of the Middle Ages, which considered history as a direct judgment of God.[35] They point to the difference between Guicciardini and Philip de Commines[36] and deny that a sense of the transcendent is the constant though silent thread of the Storia d'Italia.[37]

Actually, it would seem that Guicciardini's esoteric spheres of action and influence took the form of the joint concepts of fortuna and of God or providence. For example, both were specifically mentioned when he referred to the politics of Clement VII. Their effects showed that "la prudenzia ed e'

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[32] Ibid., 124.

[33] Palmarocchi, p. 33.

[34] Ibid., p. 43.

[35] Nulli, p. 33.

[36] Capariis, p. 126.

[37] Malagoli, p. 231.

buoni consigli degli uomini non sono sufficienti a resistere nè alla volonta di Dio, ne cella potestà della fortuna."[38] Again, he felt that "la pietà divina o la benignità della fortuna" would favor the members of the League of Cognac as they awaited an opportune moment for action.[39]

Guicciardini really wrote very much like medieval historians, for certainly he manifested in his historical work a Christian view of man's existence. His idea of divine providence must be coupled with his notion of fortuna which sometime makes him appear fatalistic. Like the workings of fortuna, the ways of God often are inscrutable, like "abyssus multa."[40] Yet, in both man's individual life and the whole course of history, God cooperates with the human act. Though God can intervene in man's behalf, he wishes that he help himself.[41] For Guicciardini, then, God, fortuna and man with his virtù, were the triple formative powers in human history.

He thought of the tortuous course of events as the result of the "heavens." In the opening paragraph of the Storia d'Italia, Guicciardini spoke of his history as describing sad events and such calamities as God wills to inflict on wretched mortals for their evil and wicked acts. He explained that selfish princes sought their own pleasure and advantage. These princes "never allowed themselves leisure to reflect on the instability of fortune."[42] Guicciardini's

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[38] "Giustificazione della politica," p. 211.

[39] Storia d'Italia, III, 130.

[40] Ricordi, II, 92.

[41] "Oratio accusatoria," p. 239. Cf. also "Ragioni che consigliano a Clemente VII di accordarsi con Carlo V: in contrario," p. 197.

[42] Storia d'Italia, I, 1.

statement indicates that human beings are responsible for their actions and that they are not complete masters of their own situation. The use of the term "fortune" here connotes the normal changes that occur in human life, for example, the succession of misfortune after days of prosperity.[43]

Guicciardini explained that the Venetians, who had heavy military losses in 1514, suffered "under the wrath of heaven or the casual events that depend on fortune."[44] Again he wrote that men always attribute to advice and planning what has often proceeded from fortune."[45] Fortune is unstable and uncertain so that even one long protected by it must fear its change.[46]

Portents of future horrors, indicating a change in "buona fortuna," fascinated him. He wrote that together "il consentimento de' Cieli e degli uomini pronunziavano all' Italia le future calamità."[47] Predictions of future events can be made not only by men who "per scienza" make a profession of this but also by men who do so "per afflato divino."[48]

Portents which excite general wonderment also give a knowledge of future

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[43]"Fortune" has, in fact, several connotations in Renaissance writing. Cf. for example, its use in Guicciardini's description of the Florentine plight in 1529, ibid., V, 289: the citizens had "no inclination to try fortune," for they thought they had sufficient means to defend themselves for many months. In other words, they simply did not wish to take a chance and lose every chance.

[44]Ibid., III, 316-317.

[45]Ibid., IV, 126.

[46]"Giustificazione della politica," p. 208.

[47]Storia d'Italia, III, 63.

[48]Ibid.

happenings. Guicciardini described at length those which occurred before the Italian invasion of Charles VIII.[49] He dwelt excessively on those preceding the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, and, he felt they foretold the calamities that would befall Italy. In Florence, a few days before, flames had been seen in the heavens and there was a comet. The wolves howled and lions fought each other. In the church of Santa Maria Novella, a woman had a fit when in a vision she saw an ox with horns of fire spreading destruction over the entire city.[50] Guicciardini noted similar signs which he believed, foretold the Florentine revolt in 1512 and the Medici return.[51] After the French defeat at Ravenna, the cardinals begged the pope to make peace, for God did not wish the struggles in behalf of Italian liberty to cost so much. There were many signs of His will.[52] And he held that the caprice of "fortuna" played a major role in war as in every other human happening. In one passage, Guicciardini seemed to deny that some men can foretell future events, saying it is useless to try to foresee them, for human existence does not follow immutable laws.[53] Considering the relative forces and strength ar Marignano in demonstration of his statements, Guicciardini explained: "pure li eventi delle battaglie sono

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[49] Ibid., I, 64.

[50] Storia fiorentine, pp. 73-74; cf. also "Elogio," pp. 227-228.

[51] Storia d'Italia, III, 236.

[52] Ibid., 193-194.

[53] "Sulle mutazioni seguite dopo la battaglia di Ravenna," Scritti politici, p. 89.

dubii, e vi può molte volte la fortuna più che la ragione."[54] Victory does not depend completely on the ability of the captain, the virtù of the troops or the accidents of time and place, for there are always "mille accidenti sottoposti interamente alla fortuna."[55] Even more important, not necessarily do those whose cause is just have victory, for daily those who fight unjustly are successful.[56] Guicciardini seems to imply here that justice is not possible in a world where reason is not supreme.

The twists of fortune often were dramatic. The sudden death of Archduke Filippo, the young and healthy son-in-law of Ferdinand of Aragon, puzzled Guicciardini. Only the variability of fortune could explain it.[57] Guicciardini also thought the immediate reversal of Florentine success in battle in 1479 after the sack of Casole could be explained by nothing else than a change of fortune.[58]

In some case, evil men enjoyed good fortune but in others they paid for their wickedness. He wrote, in connection with the scheme of Morone,[59] as he

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[54]"Discesa di Francesco I," p. 114.

[55]"Se 'l Gran Capitano debbe accettare la impresa di Italia," Scritti politici, p. 107.

[56]"Né si può promettere la vittoria chi ha la giustizia della causa, vedendosi ogni dì vincere chi combatte per la ingiustizia," ibid.

[57]Storia d'Italia, II, 183.

[58]Storie fiorentine, p. 45.

[59]Girolamo Morone plotted to oust Charles from Milan.

sought for some pattern of explanation, the he could be certain only that "There is nothing more difficult to avoid than fate, and there is no remedy against predestined misfortune."[60] He considered Lodovico Sforza's imprisonment. A prince of such magnificence, envied by so many, now in such misery![61] Still his sons were permitted to enjoy the state of Milan which Lodovico had seized wrongfully and "to the ruin of the whole world."[62] Although Alexander VI was more wicked than any pope for centuries, he was also "più felice."[63] Antonio da Leva he described as "the author of so many bitter calamities and severe punishments, who was, however, very fortunate in all his undertakings!"[64]

More often, however, Guicciardini's examples of the close relationship between wrongdoing and retribution are very evident. Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who practiced simony more than any other at the time of Roderigo Borgia's election to the pontificate, was overtaken by divine justice when his excessive ambition finally made him "an object of scorn and hatred to all mankind."[65] The Marquis of Pescara's death occurred, Guicciardini thought, "perhaps by the just judgment of God, Who would not allow him to enjoy his evil-gotten gains."[66] Liveretto da Fermo had a just end for his own wickedness, for it was

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[60] Storia d'Italia, IV, 319.

[61] Ibid., I, 393.

[62] Ricordi, II, 91.

[63] Storie fiorentine, p. 265.

[64] Storia d'Italia, V, 197.

[65] Ibid., I, 6.

[66] Ibid., IV, 324. Although Pescara had plotted unsuccessfully against the Emperor, he conquered areas for himself in north and south and built up a small fortune besides.

right that one guilty of having killed his uncle by treachery should also die by it.[67] Nor was the Florentine Vitellozzo Vitelli able to escape the tragic fate of his own brothers, who all had died a violent death at his hand.[68]

Two of his major examples stem from the period of the greatest jeopardy to the Cinquescento papacy and to Italy as a whole. In 1527 Domenico di Massimo, the richest of all the Romans, offered to lend only a hundred ducats for the defense of the city. He suffered the due punishment for his avarice. His daughters were raped by the soldiers, while he and his sons were slaves until they freed themselves from prison by an exorbitant ransom.[69] Again, one Migliau, who opposed freedom for Clement VII in 1527 on the grounds that it would be dangerous to the Emperor's interest, was punished for his impiety when he was later killed at the beginning of the siege of Naples.[70] And in reference to the maneuverings of Francis I, he wrote that "the King either had so little fear of God or was so much taken up with a regard only to his own interest, the recovery of his children."[71] What is very interesting is that these observations of Guicciardini on evil and its consequent punishment were never mentioned by Machiavelli.

Guicciardini also discussed whether fortuna favored some individuals more than others. While one who is a favorite of fortune can afford to be more

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[67] Ibid., II, 59.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., V, 137.

[70] Ibid., 172, 199.

[71] Ibid., 262. Emphasis added.

bold than another, still he should not forget that "not only may fortune vary as to different times, but also at the same time may vary as to different things."[72] The wise man has to act, but he should also make a prudent calculation of probable effects.[73] Although "la buona fortuna" is always needed, men should size up their chances and move with care.[74]

Basically men must guide themselves by the use of "la ragione."[75] The intelligent man should realize that experience and natural prudence are always helpful.[76] Both experience and reason had to operate together.[77] In the Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze, Guicciardini had Bernardo del Nero state: "Io sono di quelli che in queste cose non allegherei mai la esperienze, se io non la vedessi accompagnata dalla ragione."[78] Reason also played a major role together with faith. Guicciardini counselled men to put their hope in God, to pray and to do good works but then to make solid use of reason.[79] Here he meant that, while accepting religious doctrine as defined by the Church,[80] men should not be afraid to strike out for themselves in other areas.

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[72] Ricordi, I, 138.

[73] "Gran Capitano," p. 106.

[74] Ricordi, II, 30.

[75] Ibid., I, 160.

[76] Ibid., II, 10.

[77] Treves notes that Guicciardini "non si presenta senza un antecedente speculativo alla prova della realtà," p. 42.

[78] p. 23.

[79] "Per L'accordo tra Firenze e Clemente VII," Scritti politici, pp. 278-279. In other passages, however, Guicciardini implied that the majority of men were not intellectually equipped to consider theological matters and advocated almost a blind faith. Cf. supra pp.

[80] Cf. supra, p.

Although the future is uncertain, Guicciardini cautioned against the prey of fortuna. Good fortune and divine providence help the courageous man who first helps himself. One must not paralyze himself by fear of the whims of fortune,[81] for none can obtain great things without some danger. In every action man should have more hope than fear.[82]

Experience, reason, resolution and action were the ingredients which constituted success. While Guicciardini was "a matchless observer of the concrete human fact" and far less likely than Machiavelli to allow his observations "to be deflected to the constructive uses of his thought," he was quick to observe the flaws in some of his older friend's arguments.[83] In the final analysis, the vital role he gave reason warns of the need for caution in speaking of him as a relativist or a skeptic. And since he never neglected the importance of free will, he was no fatalist. In the 1490's, an alteration of affairs in the Italian peninsula began with the pursuit of new policies by

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[81] "Ricordisi Vostra Santità /Clement VII/ che chi si abbandona da sè medesimo, è abbandonato non solo dalla fortuna, ma etiam da Dio, el quale, come è in proverbio, non aiuta chi non s'aiuta da se stesso; el pel contrario la fortuna favorisce volentieri chi s'arrischia," "Ragioni che consigliano a Clemente VII di accordarsi con Carlo V: in contrario," p. 197. Cf. also "Oratio accusatoria," p. 239.

[82] "Gran Capitano," p. 106.

[83] Henry Osborn Taylor, Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century, I (New York, 1920), 83, 93. Cf. also Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1960), p. 197, for a discussion of Guicciardini with other figures who were for the most part "pure" empiricists, products of the Counter-Renaissance. Haydn's group includes Vives and Telesio in natural science, Vesalius in anatomy, Machiavelli and Guicciardini in history and political theory, Bodin (with reservations) and Le Roy in historical method and social, political and economic theory, and, above all, Montaigne. He explains that, if they were tainted by any mystical or occult influences, they nevertheless followed with considerable fidelity the pragmatic path of naturalistic empiricism.

France, Milan, Florence, Naples and the Papacy,[84] and these were the work of free men.

Yet fortuna, while not hampering the individual exercise of free will, nonetheless seemed to Guicciardini to set up a certain pattern a person had to follow. He knew this well. He was of himself inclined always to desire the overthrow of the Church's civil government so he attributed to chance his service under two popes and his incessant striving for their success.[85]

In Guicciardini's thinking, there is often a contrariety between desire and action, between human acts and fortune. This contrariety is also evident in his view on scared abuses. Papal misdemeanors scandalized him because of his belief in the sacredness of the office. The pope was, for all the difficulties of his position as a Cinquecento prince, Christ's vicar on earth.[86] He lamented the evils of the Roman court: "non si può dire tanto male della corte romana che non meriti che se ne dica più, perche e una infamia, uno esempio di tutti e' vituperi ed obbrobri del mondo."[87] He confessed that no man could feel greater disgust than he at the ambition, avarice and profligacy of the priesthood, not only because these vices were odious in themselves but

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[84] Storia d'Italia, I, 29.

[85] Ricordi, I, 124; II, 28.

[86] Storia d'Italia, V, 156-157.

[87] "Considerazioni," Scritti politici, p. 22.

especially because they were utterly abhorrent in men supposedly dedicated to God.[88]

Yet in sections of his works and in his dedication to the popes, Guicciardini manifested a higher regard for them than he himself may have realized. He told the Cardinal of Cortona that he would rather be dead than experience in Rome the cruelty suffered by Pope Clement.[89] Whenever he considered, in later years, Clement's imprisonment and his anguish, he was overcome by melancholy.[90] What disturbed Guicciardini most, he confessed, was the fact that not even a single lance was broken to deliver Clement after he had "stirred up war in almost all the world" for the benefit of others![91]

Many of the statements in the Ricordi collection gave evidence of Guicciardini's later cynicism. Whether he meant things as strongly as he wrote them is open to doubt. In his reconstruction of the speech of Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, in 1526 in favor of an agreement with the French King, Guicciardini noted that it was more to the imperial advantage "to trust the word of so great a king than the immoderate covetousness of priests."[92]

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[88] Ricordi, II, 28.

[89] "Prigionia di Clemente," p. 11.

[90] Guicciardini confessed that "non ti truovi mai in sì allegro ragionamento e pensiero, che rappresentandotisi la memoria della sua prigione, non si interrompa e si converta in somma mestizia, non per la considerazione de' danni tuoi, ma per la sua sì lacrimosa infelicità," "Consolatoria," p. 170. Emphasis added.

[91] Storia d'Italia, V, 146.

[92] Ibid., IV, 346.

With laymen apparently the situation was not quite the same, "for the world and its rulers are what they are and not what they should be."[93] Since he never thought they could be anything but selfish, he did not have a similar reaction to lay vices. He found it hard to understand how many consecrated to God's service could act as they did. If not for his own ambition, he confessed.

> I should have loved Martin Luther as myself: not that I would be loosed from the laws prescribed by the Christian religion as commonly interpreted and understood, but because I long to see this pack of scoundrels brought within due bounds, that is to say, purged of their vices or stripped of their authority.[94]

These sentences of Guicciardini afford the proper opportunity to consider the more typical Renaissance qualities he manifested. Throughout the Ricordi exists the basic though often unexpressed dilemma, that one should be noble and, on the other hand, one has to act in an ignoble manner. To seek wealth and fame for the sole purpose of enjoyment, carries the stamp of a base and ignoble mind. Yet, since human life is as corrupt as it is, one has to seek riputazione lest his virtues go unnoticed and they be unesteemed as they are in a poor man.[95] Riputazione was one of Guicciardini's basic criteria. He advised that a man never refrains from doing what will gain him this benefit, for actually one who lacks it will also lack friends and position.[96] A good

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[93] Ricordi, II, 179.

[94] Ibid., 28.

[95] Ibid., I, 141.

[96] Ibid., 174.

reputation is a sufficient reason for doing what is good, for it can often and in a variety of ways be of "utilita incredibile."[97]

He wrote of the reputation he enjoyed at stated periods of his life. His Spanish experience had turned out very successful. He got along well with the King and gained for himself a good reputation.[98] A fruitful life must have honor and reputation, and one must accommodate himself to the attainment of these qualities so that he does not look as though he were born yesterday or inexperienced in the ways of the world. All should know him as a person of letters, of virtù, of magnanimous sould and of experience! As a Christian, a philosopher and a man of the world, Guicciardini realized that life afforded many opportunities for self-advancement and the recognition of a person's good qualities.[99]

The Ricordi, which is very confusing when one seeks to understand Guicciardini's mentality, abounds in unclear statements and even contradictions. Yet even this situation can be explained. Guicciardini knew what was right but sometimes he saw that he could gain immediate advantages by pursuing a course of ambition and self-interest. He admitted that "true merit lies in doing what we have to do well...as in a play, he is no less applauded who acts well the

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[97] Ibid., 168. Cf. also ibid., 167, where Guicciardini explains one can gain a good reputation by rendering service to a group although one gains even more notice by serving important individuals!

[98] "Ricordanze," pp. 70, 73.

[99] "Consolatoria," Scritti autobiografici, pp. 189-190.

part of a servant than he who wears the robes of a king. In short, each in his own station may do himself honor and deserve praise."[100] One who has high esteem for honor, the finest quality in a man, will never be guilty of any unworthy deed.[101]

Guicciardini's view of honor seems essentially connected with riputazione and self-interest. By the ruin of the Pope, he told himself, "you have lost the presidency of the Romagna, a place which would have been most useful to your policy and your personal reputation."[102] He was proud to mention that he sought to serve the patria but he was basically motivated by ambition, honor and the esteem of men to keep up his good reputation. Perhaps those sentiments were less laudable than an unselfish desire to work for the patria but they were not to be condemned. But Guicciardini was willing to admit that one who lacked ambition actually had greater peace of soul.[103]

In other selections can be seen the amorality and indeed the immorality so often charged to both Guicciardini and Machiavelli. If one is placed in a situation in which he must either suffer injury or inflict it, he should choose that course which is most to his own advantage. Guicciardini qualified his view with the admonition that one must not allege dangers to justify violence that

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[100] Ricordi, I, 151. Emphasis added.

[101] Ibid., 105.

[102] "Consolatoria," p. 165.

[103] Ibid., pp. 183-185.

he wants to commit through greed or malice.[104]

Like Machiavelli, Guicciardini realized the merits of dissimulazione. He felt that, though sincerity is a noble quality, it can sometimes hurt the one who practices it. Because of the perverse nature of man, deception is useful and necessary even though odious and unbecoming. While one should exercise candor in daily affairs so that he will be more readily trusted, on certain important occasions he might well resort to dissimulation.[105] Guicciardini would not commend one who spent his entire life in deceit but now and then he would approve it.[106] If a man cannot restore the balance with a man of high station, the only remedy is to endure the situation outwardly, while taking secret measures against him.[107]

Guicciardini expounded views on severity in government as Machiavelli had done in Il Principe. Severity is essential for good government because of "la malignità degli uomini," and a ruler should make it appear that he has to act cruelly for the public good.[108] Guicciardini commended governors who inflict few severities or punishments but know how to get and keep a name for ruthlessness.[109] Actually, a ruler should resort to murder only when there is a

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[104] Ricordi, I, 153. Emphasis added.

[105] Ibid., 45.

[106] Ibid., 46.

[107] Ibid., 27.

[108] Ibid., 85. Guicciardini admired Ferdinand of Aragon, who made all his actions appear good. Cf. supra, pp

[109] Ibid., 119.

genuine need. But Guicciardini's reason for advising few murders is not that such action is immpral but rather that in such actions one frequently loses more than he gains.[110]

He was convinced that both religion and the force of arms are fundamental to the life of republics and kingdoms.[111] When he could not solve the difficult problem of the relations between religion and morals and politics, however, he tended to expedience. To rule states there is a need for men "che amassino piu la patria che l'anima, perchè è impossibile regolare e' governi e gli stati volendo tenerli nel modo si tengono oggi, secondo e' precetti della legge cristiana."[112] A case in point was his recommendation that all the Pisan prisoners who had revolted against Florence should be killed in order to weaken that city. Though this might not be Christian, "ragione e uso degli stati" required it.[113]

There were other areas too where Guicciardini could not take a firm stand. He felt that there was no greater good fortune in the world than to see one's enemy prostrate at his feet, a situation which a ruler should do everything to secure. Yet still greater is the glory which comes from extending mercy and

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[110] Ibid., 120.

[111] "Considerazioni intorno ai Discorsi del Machiavelli," p. 21.

[112] Dialogo, p. 162.

[113] Opere inedite, II, 212. Cf. also Barkhausen, p. 89, and Friedrich Meinecke, Machiavellism, trans. Douglas Scott (New Haven, 1957), p. 46 and n.2.

pardon to one's enemy.[114]

For Guicciardini, then, the fundamental criterion for all action is not a moral one at all. His Ricordi contained rules for ordinary cases; exceptional ones had to be considered separately and one had to use his discretion.[115] Discrezione is the basic directive force for human action. Such a view meant the separation of political action from that of morality.

So much for Guicciardini's view of the action required in a period of ruthless individualism and ferment. How did he accept a situation which was the central religious occurrence of his age? This was the Lutheran break with Rome.

The peace of Christendom was, in Guicciardini's era, something which good men sincerely desired but politics did not allow. Guicciardini laid accent on the danger of the Lutheran heresy and its hatefulness to God.[116] His own view on this "impious and poisonous heresy"[117] shows his religious position. His account followed the usual humanist pattern, stress on the "sale" of indulgences, the break itself, and the errors of Luther. Aside from repeating the spiritual abuses in the Catholic Church, Guicciardini paid very little attention to Lutheran ideas of reform. He focused his attention primarily on how political

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[114] Ricordi, I, 34.

[115] The phrase is "si possono male scrivere altrove che nel libro della discrezione," ibid., 35.

[116] Storia d'Italia, IV, 285, 288.

[117] Ibid., V, 184.

and economic motives contributed to the break and how the princes took over the movement.

He explained that the Holy See granted indulgences only to extort money from simple men and that the commissioners practiced simony. There was indignation and scandal in many regions, especially in Germany, where many of these commissioners sold plenary indulgences while they enjoyed themselves in the taverns. Luther found in this a great opportunity to crusade against the "indulgence traffic," and to negate papal authority as well and thus become most popular.[118]

In a passage describing Luther's relations with the Curia, Guicciardini suggested that the apostolic delegate had goaded Luther into a last desperate stand. By offering Luther some ecclesiastical dignity or some rich prebend,[119] he might have persuaded him to reject his errors. Perhaps the revolt could have been avoided if such a course had been pursued at the right moment.[120]

With more wisdom, Guicciardini saw the practical reasons for Lutheranism's appeal to many of the German princes. Some who embraced the sect were sincere or at least partly excusable by the just occasion given them, but most wanted money and popularity and the favor of the Duke of Saxony. These did not want to be deprived of the church property they had confiscated, but others were

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[118] Storia d'Italia, IV, 285, 288.

[119] "...se le parole ingiuriose e piene di minacce che gli disse il cardinale di San Sisto legato apostolico non lo avessino condotto a ultima disperazione, si crede sarebbe stato facile dandogli qualche degnità o qualche modo onesto di vivere, farlo partire dagli errori suoi," ibid., 83.

[120] Ibid.

careful and tried to keep this contagion from spreading into their realms.[121]

Guicciardini wrote of the diversity and the lack of restraint in Lutheran opinions. Scripture, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors, canon law and papal decrees were daily given new and suspect meanings and unheard-of interpretations. And some of Luther's followers, already despising his authority, set out to make the Eucharist something evil and diabolical. Even outside of Germany, these notions spread and further gave way to "ogni nuova e perversa invenzione o interpretazione," for they freed men from "molti precetti...gli riducono a modo di vita quasi libero e arbitrio." This situation bred contrary opinions among the heretics themselves so that their thought was in complete confusion. Guicciardini felt the Lutheran errors were sustained by the licence given people on the level of morality.[122]

By 1530, the schisms that arose in Lutheran doctrine were so many and so contrary to one another that very few gave any consideration to the life and authority of Martin Luther. Hence even the German princes began to solicit a general council for they could think of no better remedy for their troubles. Guicciardini wrote:

> For even the Lutherans, trying to justify their cause with the authority of religion, insisted on holding it [a council;] and it was believed that the authority of the decrees to be issued by the council, would be sufficient, if not to turn the minds of the chiefs of the heretics from their errors, at least to reduce some of the people to more satisfactory views.[123]

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[121] Ibid., 68, 70-71.

[122] Ibid., 69-71.

[123] Ibid., V, 300-301.

But the Lutheran break from the fold had for some time been consummated. This fact, war, the widespread fear of a council--all pushed such a convocation into the next papal reign.

Guicciardini showed he was a man of the Renaissance, denouncing the corruption of the Curia as a cause for the spread of the Hussite errors and the rupture of Christendom. On the other hand, he was also a man of religion who was not able to understand how Lutheranism actually happened. He seems to have looked upon the phenomenon with dismay as a split in at least the formal religious unity of Europe.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

THE PESSIMISM OF GUICCIARDINI

Guicciardini's personal tragedy was a part of the tragedy of all Italy. Like Machiavelli, he had actively participated in the central events of his age, all connected in some way with Italy's role in the power struggle of the sixteenth-century. When Guicciardini saw no hope for Italian freedom after the successive imperial victories of 1527, 1529 and 1530, he abandoned his active role of papal service, went into retirement, and began the writing of his Storia d'Italia. The tone of this work and of his apologetic writings is pessimistic.

The hard pessimism of Guicciardini, so evident in his latter years, had a double foundation, one somewhat natural to his personality, the other based upon the events of his career and of his service in behalf of the libertà d'Italia. When these events did not follow the only pattern which he thought could achieve this libertà, Guicciardini realized that all hope was gone.

In any case, Guicciardini's pessimism was not blind. Camillo Cavour recognized that he was a man who truly knew affairs and events and who, as a matter of fact, knew them better than Machiavelli.[1] Adolph Thiers too

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[1] P. Villari, Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi, II, Milano, 1927, 119, n., cited in Palmarocchi, Studi Guicciardiniani, p. 273.

understood that Guicciardini was an able diplomat, an able administrator, an able military man and an able historian only because he was a penetrating observer of the idiosyncracies of individuals and of political groups. All his life, Thiers recalled, Guicciardini was "l'un des esprits les plus clairvoyants qui aient jamais existé, surtout en affaires politiques." His entire characterization of Guicciardini is worthy of notice:

> Il avait l'âme un peu triste par nature et par satiété de la vie....Il connaissait profondément la nature humaine, et il trace de tous les personnages de son siècle des portraits éternels; parce qu'il sont vrais simples et vigoreux. A tous ces mérites il ajoute le ton chagrin et morose d'une homme fatigué des innombrables misères auxquelles il a assisté, trop morose, selon moi, car l'histoire doit rester calme et sereine, mais point choquant, parce qu'on y sent, comme dans la sévérité sombre de Tacite, la tristesse de l'honnête homme.[2]

Guicciardini's few hopes of success centered on papal leadership of the League of Cognac and allied cooperation within it. Only concentrated endeavors could dent imperial power in the peninsula. Guicciardini could never himself settle all affairs of importance to Italy though a chain linked him with the larger affairs of the Cinquecento. By his personal, family and Florentine background and training, his career of service to the Medici family and the Medici popes and in the League of Cognac, he was quite naturally involved in the course of their fortunes. Actually, the story of the Italian tragedy is the story of the fall of the Florentine Medici, of Pope Clement, of the League of

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[2]Histoire du Consolat et de l'Empire, XII, Paris, 1855, x-xii, cited in ibid., pp. 275-276.

Cognac which he headed, and of Guicciardini himself. It is no coincidence that Guicciardini began his Storia d'Italia with a Medici marked by good fortune and ended with another whose reign was marked with ill success. The papal fulcrum of Italian politics broke under the headship of Clement VII when he made peace with Charles V in 1527 and again in 1529. In Guicciardini's judgment, this settlement, which seemed necessary to the Pope, made the Emperor triumphant in Italy and nullified the effects of all the efforts of the allies of Cognac. All of Guicciardini's own activities as papal lieutenant in behalf of the League's affairs also came to nought.

Like Machiavelli, Guicciardini understood the new political complexion of his period, the national states caught in the maelstrom of intense power politics. Were this not so, he could never have written the magnificent Storia, which details the lengthy struggles among these states for the hegemony of all Italy. Yet, unlike Machiavelli, Guicciardini was essentially a borghese at heart.

Though the "barbarian" entry was indeed a reason for the decline, misery and decadence in the peninsula, Guicciardini considered it only a contributing factor. It was not the basic cause. Nor was the Italian military weakness, which Guicciardini always decried, or the lack of allied cooperation against the Emperor. In the borghese governments lay the best hope for Italian salvation. They alone could maintain peninsular stability in the face of the foreigner. States like Venice and Florence, for all the latter's civil disorder in the past, had already demonstrated their value for Italy. But somehow they no longer afforded any hope.

In his account of the alliances and counter-alliances among the Italian

states and foreign powers from the latter fifteenth century through the sixteenth, Guicciardini strongly criticized Venice for her selfish attempts to dominate Italy. Thus she ruptured the Italian equilibrium. Nevertheless, he admired the Venetian constitution as a model for firm and solid government. Florence, despite her civic problems, had also contributed to the Italian commonweal. Lorenzo de' Medici had worked to maintain a healthy balance of power within the peninsula and, as long as he was able to act as the equilibratore of Italy, peninsular unity was guaranteed. The separateness of the Italian states, large and small, princely or republican, actually contributed to the well-being of Italy so long as this equilibrium was maintained. Foreign intervention could bring misfortune to Italy only if the balance were disrupted.

This happened with Lorenzo's death when Piero, "uno pazzo," reversed his father's domestic and foreign policies and contributed to "l'ultimo tuffo alla città."[3] Though the Venetian government remained strong internally, the decline of its fortunes and those of Florence, Milan, Naples and Rome was a striking evidence of the gradual ruin of Italy. Not one of the "Big Five" powers of Italy could escape the consequences of foreign invasion and occupation and the internal disorder which resulted. Habsburg and Valois fought for Milan and Naples and neither Emperor nor King underestimated the importance of Rome

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[3] Storia d'Italia, I, 38.

and its pope. After Venice, Florence succumbed to the victorious Empire when no other course lay open to her. For Guicciardini, the sack of Rome in 1527 and the Barcelona capitulation of that year, renewed in 1529, symbolized the tragic fall of Italian civilization. But even more gravely significant for him and for the Italian political spirit was the collapse of independent Florentine government at a time when there were no odds in favor of its resurrection and reassertion. This was the crisis of the Italian borghesia and of the civiltà known to Guicciardini. The supremacy of the Empire state over the individual states, which Machiavelli saw as inevitable, was proof that the cycle of their usefulness to Italian political life had been fulfilled.

The question arises in a consideration of the bases of Guicciardini's pessimism, was his pessimism truly based on an accurate interpretation of the course of events? Did his closeness to them in any way mar his reading? He observed the situations carefully and reported them clearly, hence Guicciardini is always associated with realism. As a political figure and an historian, he had the will to comprehend the reality of things, at whatever price, and to destroy any illusions which might be formed. He derided the flights of fantasy of Machiavelli, who wished to imitate the ancients in many respects, following the ideal which had inspired the Renaissance. Guicciardini found his strength in strict attention to the realities of the times che corrono.[4] His realism precluded the spacious flights of the poetic mentality and permitted his thought, vague in the camp of pure theory, to acquire a unity and coherence which could motivate practical activity. His own career always demonstrated

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[4]Passerin d'Entrèves, p. 170.

that, for every possible contingency, he could find a few clear and simple ideas to act as the substance and nerve of action.[5]

But this empiricism and the intellectualism which worked upon its results constituted at once the strength and the weakness of Guicciardini. Passerin d'Entrèves wrote:

> Ma la sola ragione è una guida pericolosa e un'esigente compagna: e il lumen siccum dell'intelletto che rende arido, deserto e nudo il mondo del Guicciardini--una landa sterile e sconsolata. In nessun' altra opere, i limiti di una storia strettamente politica sono piú apparenti che nella Storia d'Italia....[6]

These observations on cold reality and not simple opportunism serve to explain some of Guicciardini's rather puzzling actions. In 1530, he knew that Florence could save itself from subordination to Spain only by a tempest-like accord with the Pope. No longer was Guicciardini interested in the question of a republican government for Florence or Medici rule. His dilemma concerned Medici cooperation with Charles V or complete foreign predominance. Only by a necessary surrender to the Empire could Florence save itself, yet, he always insisted that her internal liberty be preserved. For the same reasons, he defended Duke Alessandro before the Emperor and also favored the accession of Cosimo of the younger Medici line. This seemed to Guicciardini one method of working toward a stable government in Florence. When Guicciardini viewed the consolidation of Cosimo's state, however, he refused to cooperate wholly with

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[5]Palmarocchi, Studi Guicciardiniani, pp. 108-109.

[6]Passerin d'Entrèves, pp. 170-171.

it. It did not suit his expectations.

Machiavelli, like Guicciardini, devotedly served Florence. Machiavelli, as Florentine secretary, must have read Guicciardini's many reports to the Chancery and, as a roving ambassador for Florence in matters pertaining to the League of Cognac, he came into personal contact with him. But their association in the realm of thought is far more interesting. If the Storia d'Italia was Guicciardini's major historical work, it was also his political manifesto. Machiavelli's major contributions to political thought were found in Il Principe and his Discorsi.

These works indicate clearly that, in a comparison of the two thinkers, Machiavelli must come out the poet and Guicciardini the politico. Guicciardini saw in the unity of all the Italian states under one man a noble ideal but also the practical annullment of all municipal liberties. A strong Italy to buck the barbarians could be only a beautiful thought because history, Guicciardini saw, did not allow jumps. Rather one had to consider the facts of the situation, the facts of daily reality, the facts of history. In a modest way, in his own action and in his stately historical analysis, Guicciardini coped with reality, for this alone was the camp of action of a political man. His path could never be continuous, for he had to follow the complicated and often capricious development of facts. He could not, like Machiavelli, conquer reality by evading it. If Machiavelli experienced delusion and melancholy, his method allowed him to prophesy and to hope. Machiavelli made the great leap from history and called upon Italy to free herself from the barbarians. Guicciardini, as a politico, could find his freedom from disillusionment only in success. If success were wanting in the end, his facts and the ideas he

based them upon could only become the weights which would draw him down and crush him. Guicciardini wished Italy to be free but, given the trend of events, it was useless to consider such an eventuality. Therein lay the basis for Guicciardini's pessimism. It is paradoxical that Machiavelli, who was not hemmed in by the reality of the immediate, was in one sense more truly the realist. He saw the historic necessity of a revolution which would unify the Italian states. Italy could not separate herself forever from the modern phenomenon of the national state. Machiavelli could look from the real to the ultimate.

Guicciardini, on the other hand, could not triumph over his realism. From the beginning, he realized the Emperor's aims to control Italy and he knew that these objectives were fast being accomplished. Charles' greatness was such, Guicciardini wrote, that one could "desire but not hope."[7] As he watched the imperial successes and the Italian decline, Guicciardini wrote, he who has seen acutely "e co' calcoli e misura delle cose passate sa calculare e misurare assai del futuro."[8]

When Guicciardini retired to his country villa to undertake his mammoth Storia d'Italia, his world was at an end. This fact is clear in the Consolatoria, Guicciardini's answer to the Florentine republicans who, after the Medici restoration of 1527, accused him of complicity in the policies of Popes Leo and Clement. He was guilty of their failures. In his defense of

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[7] "Ragioni che consigliano a Clemente VII di accordarsi con Carlo V," Scritti politici, p. 176.

[8] Dialogo, p. 17.

himself against these charges, the most emotional part is that dedicated to the lost world of politics. Guicciardini's attention to political life was in a fundamental sense his religion, and his entire existence was devoted to it. By 1535, when he had no more decisions to make and in an atmosphere less charged with tensions and anxieties, he could contemplate the major problems of his age and his own role. He could look at events from the very personal vantage point which only few men possessed.

At the same time as he demonstrated for himself the legitimacy and the necessity of his past conduct, he offered to future judges all the material necessary for an impartial and definitive verdict. An historian of 1964 cannot find sufficient evidence to render a guilty verdict. Guicciardini tried to save his patria and Italy in the only way he knew. Though Italy fell into the slumber of the Barocca, she awoke again in the Risorgimento. Guicciardini could not foresee this but then the unity which finally came to Italy might not have satisfied one so passionately dedicated to the ideal of separate and distinct states in the Italian peninsula which would cooperate for the welfare of the whole.

To find in the failure of Guicciardini's own career the basic reason for his pessimism is far too simple an explanation. Certainly Guicciardini was motivated by ambition, an incentive which was more meaningful to him than any other. "The more men are feared, reverenced and honored, the nearer they seem to approach, and, as it were, to resemble God, to whose likeness who would not wish to attain."[9] Action upon this opportunistic motive can partially explain

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[9] Ricordi, II, 16.

the lack of coherence in his words and actions. Although he realized that it is natural for men to seek honors and preferment, he advised them, on the basis of his own experience, to try to rid themselves of all vain desires. While God and his own good fortune had raised him to higher peaks than he had ever hoped to reach, he sadly admitted that he had never found in them the satisfaction and contentment he so sincerely desired.[10] Guicciardini had to find satisfaction in his religion, and his religion was success in the materialization of his broad political ideals and in his practical political commitments.

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[10] Ibid., 15; cf. also ibid., I, 59.

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Approval Sheet

The dissertation submitted by Rita Charlotte Kucera has been read and approved by five members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy.

Nov 20, 1944
Date

Paul J. Fitz
Signature of Adviser